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## ABSTRACT

This proceedings report presents dropout statistics, descriptions of prevention programs, and recommendations for future efforts. After an introduction to the dropout problem, the proceedings contains transcripts of welcomes and greetings from the mayor of Lubbock and officials from Texas Tech's College of Education, the State Board of Education, the Coordinating Board, and the Texas Education Agency. "Prevention and Retention: Facing Dropout Problems--Finding Solutions," by Lauro Cavazos, spells out dropout statistics, economic costs of dropouts, and the family's role in dropout prevention. "Panel Discussion: Approaches to Dropout Prevention" contains reports from four school districts and a research association on dropout prevention efforts. "Give Them a Chance and Some Support: A Personal Odyssey," by Archbishop Patrick Flores, offers a personal account emphasizing the need for education and the plight of Hispanics. "Cooperative Efforts: Business, Education, and Community," by Sam Ogletree, highlights Southwestern Bell's dropout prevention efforts, such as a documentary and a Communities-in-Schools program. "Hispanic Participation in Adult Education and GED Testing Programs," by Catherine Erwin, presents results of a study that gathered information essential to the development of future adult education programs. The final section contains reports from work sessions and interest groups. The reports describe existing programs and contain recommendations for future programs. (KS)

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# Prevention and Retention. Facing Dropout Problems Finding Solutions

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Proceedings of the Second Texas  
Symposium on Hispanic Educational Issues

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# **Prevention and Retention: Facing Dropout Problems Finding Solutions**

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**Proceedings of the  
Second Texas Symposium  
on Hispanic Educational Issues**

**March 1-2, 1987  
Texas Tech University**

**SYMPOSIUM CHAIR**

**Richard E. Ishler**

**COCHAIRS**

**Clyde E. Kelsey, Jr. and Hermán S. García**

**Edited by Alice Denham**

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# **Introduction: National Development and the Dropout Problem**

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Many countries around the world are currently feeling the dramatic impact of new concepts and ideas that have resulted from almost constant changes in the world economy and from advances in technology. In the United States, we see these changes taking place regularly—in agriculture, business, government, religion—in almost every facet of society. Fortunately, some of the people who are aware of these changes are also aware of the need for education to remain abreast—indeed, to remain ahead—of these changes if our nation is to continue to grow and develop.

The national efficiency of any country depends on the extent to which individual talents and abilities are developed and appropriately utilized, with individual development as the necessary counterpart of all other kinds of development. The motivation for individual development is intrinsically related to the value systems and the goals of the nation.

A very significant barrier to individual development is the lack of knowledge. The educational process attempts to deal with this barrier in programs that range from prekindergarten schooling through the university level, from graduate education to adult, life-long learning programs.

Although there are several dimensions to the lack of knowledge, one of the most disturbing today is the dropout problem. Much about the specific causes (whether school or home related) that prompt certain individuals to leave school early remains to be learned.

Increasing efforts are being directed toward this issue. School districts and community groups across the nation are joining in the development of plans to understand better the issues facing education, including a specific focus on the dropout problem.

Such an approach to a better understanding of these issues was initiated by the College of Education at Texas Tech University by

hosting the First Texas Symposium on Hispanic Educational Issues. In April 1985, more than 175 participants from 37 Texas cities listened to several points of view on the issues and possible resolutions, as discussed by three major speakers and six responses to those presentations. The program was designed to provide the participants with an opportunity to meet in special interest groups (as community-city teams) following the presentations. In many cases, the groups of leaders who met at Texas Tech as community teams had never worked together before for the express purpose of addressing Hispanic educational issues. In that manner, the participants discussed issues as they related to their respective communities or districts, proposed strategies for solving some of the problems, and began to develop plans of action. Following the team meetings, the participants regrouped for an exchange of issues and problems, identified solutions, and proposed plans for the future.

The following statement from the Preface of the *Proceedings of the First Texas Symposium* describes the thrust of the Symposium:

Almost 45 percent of all Hispanic students in the United States fail to earn a high school diploma. Most of these, in fact, drop out of school by the tenth grade.

This great loss in human capital will have a critical impact on the future of American democracy; Thomas Jefferson was not alone in believing that a nation that thinks it can be both ignorant and free wants what never was or ever will be.

After the 1985 Symposium, follow-up studies were conducted to identify the principal problems facing Hispanic education today as perceived by the participants. The results of those surveys and studies completed by other educational researchers focused rather sharply on the dropout problem and the interrelated issues.

On the basis of the above results, a Second Texas Symposium on Hispanic Educational Issues was planned with the theme of "Prevention and Retention: Facing Dropout Problems." In this vein, state-level agencies were asked to provide summaries of their philosophies and activities regarding dropout problems. Then the participants heard a series of outstanding reports from the cities and school districts that had projects underway or studies specifically directed toward the dropout problem. After the presentations, participants met in small groups with the presenters and other resource persons to discuss in greater detail the approaches, methods, and techniques being used by some districts and communities in their efforts to alleviate the dropout

situation. Following the small group sessions, participants returned and summarized their conclusions before the entire group.

Additional studies are being conducted by researchers in the College of Education, and the results of these will be shared with the participants and any other interested parties. Our thanks to the Meadows Foundation for making it possible for persons from many walks of life to come together and work with educators and their fellow community members from across Texas to retain in school and develop as many individuals as possible—for themselves, our state, and our nation.

Clyde E. Kelsey, Jr.  
Richard E. Ishler  
Hermán S. García

# **Welcomes and Greetings**

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## **WELCOME TO LUBBOCK**

**Mayor B. C. "Peck" McMinn**

We're delighted that you're in our city, and especially delighted to have you here at Texas Tech. We appreciate very much your addressing what I consider one of the serious concerns in our schools: the attrition rate of not only the Hispanic population but of all our students. I want you to know how much I personally appreciate your taking the time to be here because if we save just one child from dropping out, it has been worth the trip.

I hope you will enjoy your stay in Lubbock and come back and see us as often as you can. We're very proud of our city, we're very proud of our university, we're very proud of the West Texas area, and we're very proud of Texas and the nation. Enjoy yourselves, give it your best shot, and let's find some solutions.

## **WELCOME TO TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY AND THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

**Richard E. Ishler**

The College of Education, with the support of the Meadows Foundation, is pleased to sponsor the Second Texas Symposium on Hispanic Educational Issues. For those of you who attended the first symposium in April 1985, "Welcome back," and for those of you who are here for the first time, "Welcome."

While a small committee consisting of Hermán García, Clyde Kelsey, and me developed the program for this symposium, I must acknowledge publicly that our President, Lauro Cavazos, came up with the original idea to focus on Hispanic educational issues. We are extremely proud that President Cavazos is serving as chairperson of the Lubbock Independent School District Task Force on Dropouts. This is an indication of his commitment to



work toward the resolution of the dropout problem in Lubbock and throughout the state. Similarly, the College of Education is committed to finding ways to keep students in school, and we have several research projects underway that look at the reasons students drop out before completing high school. Coincidentally, Representative Martinez is introducing a bill today in the Texas Legislature to reduce the dropout rate.

The dropout problem exists throughout the nation, not just in Texas. The newly released Wall Chart, from Secretary of Education Bennett, shows that in 1985:

- The U.S. average graduation rate was 70.6 percent.
- Sixteen states had dropout rates ranging from 30 percent to 46 percent.
- Texas had a 36.8 percent dropout rate and *only* six states had a higher dropout rate than did Texas.

Of course, we all know that the dropout rate is even higher for Hispanic students. Thus the problems are exacerbated for this major segment of our school population. A grim future awaits school dropouts whether they be white, black, or Hispanic. Dropping out means dropping off the ladder of achievement and economic independence into a life curtailed by poverty and lack of opportunity.

Practically every day one can read a magazine or newspaper article that addresses the dropout problem. As examples: The *Avalanche-Journal* carried a story on February 16, 1987 with this headline: "Gifted Students Dropping Out of School, Study Says." The *Dallas Morning News* headline of February 18, 1987 proclaimed: "San Antonio District Dropout Rate Highest." This article, which many of you probably saw, and which reported research by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA), listed the dropout rates for ninth graders in the eight largest school districts in Texas. They are as follows: Austin, 43 percent; Corpus Christi, 25 percent; Dallas, 43 percent; El Paso, 40 percent; Fort Worth, 35 percent; Houston, 41 percent, San Antonio, 47 percent; and Ysleta, 34 percent.

To start to address such problems, a National Dropout Prevention Center has been established at Clemson University. The center plans to focus public attention on the dropout problem, standardize reporting of dropout statistics, coordinate data bases for ongoing research, establish an electronic data base, and locate and define groups working on the dropout problem, such as our own group here.

The Institute for Educational Leadership, Inc., in Washington, D.C. has recently released a monograph titled *School Dropouts: Everybody's Business*. The monograph is a report of a national conference that was designed to brief congressional staff on what we know about students who drop out, what we think we know about dropout programs that work, and what information about dropouts we think merits consideration by policymakers. As the conference made clear, dropping out of school is not an issue to be dealt with by the schools only; it is a community problem that must be addressed by every facet of society.

We at Texas Tech University obviously believe that the problem affects all elements of society. That is why we have invited you here today, and that is why we shall continue to take the lead in the state to reduce the dropout rate in the Texas public schools. To borrow the slogan of the United Negro College Fund, "The mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Thank you for coming, and I look forward to working with you throughout the conference. Again, welcome to Texas Tech University.

## GREETINGS FROM THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Paul Dunn**

Maria Elena Saavedo Flood, member of the Texas State Board of Education, from District 1 out of El Paso, was scheduled to be with you today. Due to commitments from the Texas Tech University School of Medicine, she had to be in Phoenix today and asked if I would fill her shoes. That's a tall order to do because what she is today I could never even hope to try to accomplish. But on her behalf, and on behalf of the Texas State Board of Education, I welcome you and thank you for the time you have taken to come and address this critical issue at this time.

There is a delicacy that comes from the sea and serves not only as food but a potential for great wealth, and that is the oyster. The oyster has a life of sifting food from the sea and the sand within the ocean. At times, a grain of sand lodges in its system and irritates the oyster, which then places a secretion around the irritation, because it cannot rid itself of the irritation. Over time, it becomes a pearl. People over the ages have taken the pearl as a sign of great wealth and great potential. The divers who search

for them have to pry through hundreds of oysters to come up with one good pearl. It takes time; it takes patience. I challenge you today to take this conference and be like the pearl divers. Hunt for one particular issue, or one particular ah-ha, or an idea for a goal you can use in your school. Then take that back with you for the benefit of the more than 3,000,000 school children in Texas today.

In my work with the state board, I have identified four types of children. It's your job to go back and take these pearls of wisdom back to the four types of kids. There is the child who knows not, and he knows not that he knows not. You will have to care and love that child all the days of his life. There is the child who knows not, but he knows that he knows not. With time and care you can teach him a great deal. There is the child who knows, but he knows not that he knows. Wake him up, for he is asleep. And there is the child who knows, and boy, he *knows* that he knows. Therein lies our future.

Search today for a pearl—one little idea that may work for you. Implement the idea, and maybe we can lick some of the problems in education.

Once again, on behalf of Maria Elena Flood and the Texas State Board of Education, I welcome you to this conference and hope that you have a very stimulating and profitable day.

## GREETINGS FROM THE COORDINATING BOARD

### Teresa Palomo Acosta

I welcome you on behalf of Commissioner of Higher Education Kenneth Ashworth and the Coordinating Board. I thank you for coming together again to focus on the critical issue of Mexican Americans and educational opportunity.

The Office of Equal Educational Opportunity Planning at the Coordinating Board, with which I am associated, does support collaborations among educators, businesses, parents, students, and local communities. Such collaborations foster more genuine efforts for postsecondary educational access because of the shared sense of responsibility each sector has for developing a more capable labor force for the next century.

I urge you, as parents, teachers, students, and leaders in your communities, to take on a large role and constant vigilance to ensure that Mexican-American children become educated at

higher levels. I say this to remind you that neither the Texas Plan for Equal Educational Opportunity nor similar plans in 18 other states would exist were it not for the courage of the families in the South that brought suit to enforce equal opportunity.

As leaders in your cities, you must remind us [in higher education] continuously that higher education authorities and officials have made a commitment to the positive, long-term benefits of motivating more young Mexican Americans to go to college, to graduate school, and to the professional schools, so that they can also take their places in leading the society in which they live.

The existence of the Texas Equal Educational Opportunity Plan for Higher Education is a reminder—that the dream of fulfilling this opportunity has for too long been deferred—as much as it is a guide for creating greater access. We should not forget either part of this equation.

In Texas, we are in the fourth year of a five-year plan for ensuring equal access, yet our minority enrollment goals are still largely unfilled, while our college progress and retention rates have changed only slightly. A significant reason for this is that higher education institutions have yet to commit themselves firmly to bringing the idea of college to the minds of youngsters in more creative ways. Too few have established joint public school and postsecondary initiatives to motivate Mexican Americans to see college as a real probability, a real goal. We are attempting, albeit slowly, to convince institutions, through annual conferences and other activities, that they must reach deeper down and nurture the academic goals of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, and that college nights for graduating seniors do not increase the true potential pool of Mexican American and black youths we need to educate. Too many of our institutions have only immediate high school outreach, which should make us especially determined to alter forever what researcher Harold Hogkinson recently noted in his report on Texas and its educational system, when he said:

Special attention needs to be paid to a state program that will create winners, not just pick them. (Texas education seems designed to select achievers rather than to create them.) The difference is a major one. Texas in the future will have no "throw-away" youths who can be disposed of without concern. Every young person will have to fulfill his potential if the state is to fulfill its destiny.

In a recent edition of the *Austin American Statesman*, I read an Associated Press story called "Educational Harvest: Texas Schools

Help Migrant Workers Break Chain of Illiteracy." The article was about Mexican American migrant students from Pharr-San Juan-Alamo High School and the results of 20 years of federal funding assistance to migrant laborers elsewhere. It notes that in 1973, 75 percent of migrants dropped out of school and only 3 percent went on to college. Now, 25 percent go to college or technical school. In 1980, less than 30 percent of the migrant students in Pharr graduated from high school, whereas in 1983, more than 55 percent of Pharr's migrant high school students graduated. This is great progress in a relatively short period.

My point in bringing this to your attention is that I would like to see higher education really become actively involved in the lives of minority youths—whether they are from migrant or inner-city backgrounds. I would like to see colleges continuously attentive to the college preparation of these youths, through mentorships, summer enrichment programs, special workshops, and the like. Among the reported 50 percent of the 94,000 migrant students who graduate from high school in Texas. How many are never counseled to enroll in college because the institutions do not consider them "college material?" The article says about half of them are not. I think that it is quite true that my generation of Hispanic youths, which went to college during the 1970s, got there mostly by luck or some other means, mostly our own initiative. This should certainly not be the case now and in the future.

I want to end by telling you a personal story. It keeps me motivated in my work at the Coordinating Board.

I finally went to college two years after high school graduation because I wanted to read as much literature as I could fit into my imagination and to do so under the guidance of professors who, I surmised, knew more than I did. I really did not want a university diploma. I surprised myself by taking chemistry, history, and all the requirements (minus two hours) for the associate degree. Of course, I took as many hours as I was permitted in individualized reading classes. I further astonished myself by talking myself into transferring to The University of Texas at Austin and graduating with honors. And two years later, I literally shocked myself by being accepted into the graduate program in journalism at Columbia University in New York City, the center of the nation's financial and international trade worlds. What a change for a kid from rural Central Texas! I think about this continuously, about what a difference can be

made in one's life by even the most idealistic and private of goals—wanting to read the world's great literature.

There are many other such young Mexican Americans in my home town of McGregor and in your home town. These young people have a kernel of a dream of their own, which they secretly harbor. We cannot hesitate to strengthen their fragile wish. Together, we can give them the opportunity to see it through.

## **GREETINGS FROM THE TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY**

**Rubén Olivares**

As you all know, there is a lot of activity going on in Austin this time of the year. With the legislature in session, many things are happening. Commissioner Kirby has been meeting with key legislators in analyzing the current bills that are being proposed, and in determining the best posture that the agency will take in response to those proposals. He is meeting this morning with some of those legislators, and he has asked me to extend his regrets for not being here to discuss with you what he considers to be one of the most serious problems facing public education today.

The problem of the school dropout is one that not only limits the chances of success of thousands of students each year, but also has a profound effect on the chances of success for our entire state. The statistics are alarming. Those who do not finish school are 30 percent of all students, 30 percent of all minority students, and 45 percent of Hispanic students. Even more alarming are the demographic projections of the state's population in the year 2000 and beyond. The numerous reports on dropouts and attrition rates, the reports that led to education reform in Texas, and the conferences taking place throughout the state of Texas, are all indicators of the seriousness of the problem and underscore the significance of what you are all about here today.

Only one-third of our students will attend college. Of the remaining two-thirds, one-third goes into the working world, the other one-third drops out of school without either the education skills or job skills necessary to succeed. These are the students that we are here to talk about today. These are the children who as adults will make up 85 percent of our prison population. Our challenge is to break that cycle now. Our challenge is to



dramatically reduce the dropout rate. A review of the agenda for the program today shows that we are on track. The topics are relevant and timely.

Since the passage of the education reform bills almost four years ago, and under the leadership of the State Board of Education, the Texas Education Agency has been instituting statewide policies and educational practices that strike at the core of the problem: the no-pass, no-play rule; teacher testing; the teacher appraisal system; the TEAMS [Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills] test including the exit-level test for high school juniors, maximum class size requirements, our pre-kindergarten programs, and many, many other things that the Texas Education Agency is currently engaged in. All of these programs are predicated on the realization that our past educational programs and practices were working against the enhancement of educational opportunities for all children. Recently the State Board of Education approved a long-range education plan which outlines present and future actions. It will greatly impact what it is that you are doing now in the role that you play as a parent, as an educator, or as an interested participant.

According to the long-range plan I mentioned, beginning in 1987-88, the accreditation process of public schools is going to center on student, campus, and system-wide performance. While we are actively carrying out the accreditation process for this year with the remaining school districts in the old way, we are also working to change the process to zero in on all of the intent and the implications for this new accreditation process that will be taking place. Commissioner Kirby said to tell you that there are too many school districts that have been issued counterfeit accreditation certificates, and that we can no longer continue to do that. So the data that will be looked at in school districts to determine the quality and the worth of the programs leading to accreditation will include the student dropout rate, student test scores, and the instructional delivery systems that are in place (including bilingual education and all of the other programs that are now in place, either by law or as rules).

Again, on behalf of the commissioner, I would like to thank you for the invitation and to express his regrets for not being here.



# Prevention and Retention

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## FACING DROPOUT PROBLEMS: FINDING SOLUTIONS

Lauro F. Cavazos

Like many others, I find Texas Independence Day an excellent choice for a discussion such as this one. Texans had high hopes in 1836. Those of us who are here today represent a fulfillment of that dream. May the dreams we express today be equally well fulfilled—and may we not have to wait a century and a half to see it happen. Texas can ill afford the virtue of patience in attacking the problem—no, the challenge—of far too many school dropouts.

Today we want to hear every idea you have and every report of success in your home school districts. I am optimistic about the outcome of this symposium. We know that we *can* keep students in school, we *can* prevent dropouts because we *must*—even in the face of those who might throw cold water on our efforts. It's not especially uncommon for me to disagree with *Texas Monthly*, so it's no surprise to me that I disagree emphatically with a recent comment in that magazine, from a writer claiming that there is in South Texas a tradition of "deep suspicion of those with energy and ideas." Like some of you, I'm a South Texan by birth. (I'm a West Texan by adoption and a seventh-generation Texan in fact and at heart.) I've crisscrossed this state from border to border, and I've traveled and lived in other states, but in no other state have I found a more eager acceptance of new ideas. *Energy* in Texas means more than underground resources; we're still a people with the energetic pioneer spirit. We welcome new ideas. We're a land developed from agriculture and oil. You can ask any rancher or oilman; they'll admit they're all risk-takers—gambling on weather, markets, and exploration. Texans I've known best have an inner stamina, a rebounding energy. They look for the same in others. We're quick to recognize and adopt any good new idea. We've gathered here today to prove it.

Since our first symposium in 1985, we've seen some progress. The statistics for the most part don't show it yet, but there has been progress. For instance, we've seen public attention drawn to the dropout problem. We read about it in the popular press; we hear about it on national networks and on local stations.

Industry leaders are showing an interest. Economists are reporting on the cost burdens of an undereducated population. We're getting better data on the relationship between crime and the dropout rate. The social implications are hitting home and shattering a lot of complacency.

This broader public awareness of issues in public education, however, trims only a thin strip off the frustration felt by educators. It creates a public support, of course, for such efforts as Lubbock's task force working to reduce the local dropout rate. It creates public support for McAllen's back-to-basics program and for innovative efforts in El Paso, Dallas, Houston, and smaller districts throughout the state.

As important as it is, public awareness is only the necessary first step. The second step is to find workable solutions. Note that word *solutions* is plural. There can be no one solution for all schools in one district, or for all districts in one state. The idea of uniformity may be one of our greatest obstacles. We want pat answers. Yet we know that while one-size-fits-all may be great for socks, it can't ever work for schools. Communities are as different as the families that call them home. So, while we have a common problem in dropout rates, our solutions can't and shouldn't be clones of one another.

The ideas we bring here have to be adapted to our individual communities, our special resources, the particular needs of our students. Yet when I hear of an eastern high school that has a one percent dropout rate, I know that Texas schools can reach a similar goal. We have no real other choice. There have to be solutions or there will be disintegration of our American way of life.

I'm sure most of you have studied the recent report of the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). This report was issued last October. I want to review some of the findings that could help set priorities for your thinking. For instance:

- About 85 percent of Texas dropouts were born in the United States. Fewer than 15 percent were born in a foreign country.

- Nearly half of the Hispanic dropouts had completed fewer than nine grades when they left school.
- Only 39 percent of the 1,095 school districts in Texas have a system for identifying dropouts.
- Fewer than 4 percent of the districts have conducted some form of dropout research, and only nine districts have conducted formal research on dropouts.
- About 89 percent of dropout programs in the state have no evaluation data.
- The dropout problem is costing the state more than \$17 billion annually in foregone income and lost tax revenues and increased costs in welfare, crime and incarceration, unemployment insurance and payment, and in adult training and education.

The IDRA study estimated that every dollar invested in educating potential dropouts should bring a return of nine dollars to the state. The economic incentives alone should energize our search for solutions. We have to look at the economic costs and benefits in any study of education, of course. I think it's interesting that Congressman Jim Wright commented last month that the GI Bill used by so many servicemen has returned \$20 in tax revenues for every dollar spend in direct payments.

It is good to remember that the goal of public education is not so much money in the treasury as it is a well-informed society capable of making good decisions, a society that can govern itself well. Even that falls short of the ideal in education—the value of learning just for the joy of knowing. Neither of these goals has a dollar sign to guide our thinking, but we—as educators and as beneficiaries of the American education system—know very well that in intrinsic value, education is priceless and cannot be assigned a dollar value.

On the other hand, in tight economic times, we also have to recognize that there can and must be placed on education a dollar value—even if it is only a partial measure. We also have to convince the public legislators that we have done our homework, that we know what we're about.

Although I've cited only a few of the findings of the recent Texas dropout study, it's important that I remind you also of some recommendations of the same report:

- Development of a standardized dropout definition with explicit identification procedures. (For instance, 16 percent

of the students tracked who were presumed dropouts had not, in fact, dropped out of school.)

- Development of standard procedures for calculating the dropout rate.
- Development of early dropout intervention efforts, given the large number of students who leave before the ninth grade.
- Development and replication of model dropout prevention and recovery programs for high-risk groups.
- Development of systematic approaches to the evaluation of dropout prevention and recovery efforts.
- Development of a linkage between public and private sector initiatives in cooperative efforts to reduce the massive number of dropouts in the state.
- And one more: There is a need to make an investment in dropout prevention and recovery efforts that is commensurate with the magnitude of the problem and its economic impact on the state of Texas.

The partial list of findings and recommendations gives us some idea of the magnitude of the task before us today. This symposium should be looked upon as a kind of retreat, a time for reflection and planning, for sharing and acquiring new ideas, new approaches to one of the most dangerous problems we face in Texas and in the nation.

If the loss of more than \$17 billion statewide isn't impressive enough to get your attention, think of another recent report, which estimates that for each school class nationwide about \$288 billion in lifetime earnings and about \$68 billion in tax revenues for all government levels are lost because of dropouts. We worry about shortfalls in our state coffers and have good reason to wring our hands over the national debt. Yet we can't seem to get a good handle on this one part of the solution: educating our children through the twelfth grade. We all remember our childhood hero—the Dutch boy with his finger in the dike. But for those of us in education, all we've done so far is call attention to the water pouring through the hole. We have yet to reduce the flood.

I'll grant you, quite candidly, that as a university president, I have a personal and special interest in the public school dropout rate. As the pool of graduates is reduced by dropouts, the pool of potential university students is reduced as well. We in higher education, quite naturally, want a larger pool of more highly

qualified students to maintain enrollments and also to increase the quality of our product.

In none of the studies I have encountered do I see any real analysis of the relationship between a high public school dropout rate and the trade deficit with which our nation is confronted. We hear, quite properly, about the need to support high-tech research. And voices are raised in support of graduate education. But where is the vast pool of personnel for the research? We see an increasing number of foreign students in our graduate programs. We're glad to have them, certainly, but where are the American Hispanics, blacks, and whites other than Hispanics in these graduate programs?

The statistics behave as if they're almost cast in concrete. They don't change. Let me refresh your memories. Just barely two-thirds of our children are completing high school. Only 12 percent complete college. Among Hispanics, only 7 percent complete college, and only 2 percent are ever awarded a graduate or a professional degree. Black students do a little better—12 percent complete college and 4 percent complete the graduate or professional degree. Among whites other than Hispanic, 23 percent complete college and 8 percent complete graduate and professional degree programs. My view is that even that highest figure is too low if the United States wants to continue its world leadership.

I hope—and I'm sure you hope—that by the 1990 census, those figures improve. Interim reports, however, don't give us much on which to base such hope. Records indicate that the less educated population tends to have the higher birth rate as well as higher dropout rates. To change patterns, we need intervention programs.

It's interesting—if discouraging—to see the economics of the trend. The number of dropouts for the graduating class of 1985-86 in Texas has been estimated at 86,000. That's a 33 percent attrition rate for a single group of high school students over a three-year period. The experts estimate that each of these students could have been kept in school through the twelfth grade for less than \$4,000. Over the course of their lifetimes, the projected losses in tax revenue alone would average about \$59,000 per dropout—for a \$55,000 net loss. Yet tax revenues spell only part of the problem. While I have not found any *absolutes* in studies relating the costs of crime to inadequate education, there is a very conservative figure for Texas estimated at \$368 million annu-

ally—money required for police protection, judicial costs, incarceration—all added to property losses. The bottom economic line is clear. Educated people contribute to the economy. The uneducated and undereducated drain our economy.

Beyond the economic significance, who will defend this nation? Not dropouts. Who will design our sophisticated weaponry? How about the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health? Who will run the FDA tests? Who will chart the progress in the wars against heart disease, cancer, and AIDS?

Even more basic than that, who will cast the votes? Can we be so naive as to think that high school dropouts won't vote? Current records indicate they are less likely to vote than their better educated peers, but they do vote. And I remind you once again of Thomas Jefferson's simple but profound admonition: "A nation that expects to be ignorant and free wants what never was and never will be."

The protection of our liberties is that simple. If we want our freedoms, we want education for all of our people. We want more than a haphazard, halfhearted education for our children. We want them to finish high school and have in hand a diploma that opens the doors to employment, to higher education, to dreams that aren't shattered but are fulfilled.

Now, there is one further thing I want to call to your attention before I leave you to your own discussions and conclusions. In almost all the studies I have seen recently, I find one factor missing in the education equation. That is the family contribution to the dropout problem. We hear about what the states should do, what the federal government should do. We hear of proposals going to the state legislature and coming from our representatives. There is talk about how many dollars must go into the solution. We hear a great deal about what educators should do to hold the interest of students. Missing is what parents should be doing about the dropout rate, about encouraging their children to stay in school, and persuading them and insisting that they stay in school. We occasionally hear about a decline in family unity within the Hispanic culture. We're certainly aware of problems created because of the growing numbers of latchkey children. We are well aware of the increased incidence of teenage pregnancy with the adverse effect of that problem on the dropout rate.

With all of these very obvious factors, however, where are the proposals to help alleviate them in order to reduce the dropout

rates to which they contribute? Are we, as educators, reinforcing the concept of family unity? Do we, as educators, have any real understanding of what happens with children after school, while parents are at work? Do we know which children leave the classrooms for empty homes? Or who is taking homework assignments to noisy, one-room dwellings that shelter a half dozen or more occupants? What about this troublesome issue of sex education in the schools—or lack of it in families? Do we know—or even care to know—the answers we need?

I do not for a moment claim that educators alone can solve every problem of family unity, latchkey children or teenage pregnancies. But solutions we develop today must take into account that these and similar problems are part of the dropout issue. We have to recognize that a great many parents do seem to find answers that match their needs and the needs of their children. I'd say most parents are convinced they are doing their best. But if their best isn't good enough, if we as educators have better ideas, if citizens in any walk of life have better ideas, then surely they should be shared—and not shared only in a context of a *You oughta do this—You oughta do that*. People who are shown how it's possible to do a better job usually will do a better job. Parents as well as students need help from educators and those who work to support education. But parents can give to education, too.

I confidently and unequivocally state that unless parents are brought into the planning process, solutions won't work. Of this I am convinced.

When I speak of parents in the planning process, I don't mean, of course, the typical PTA leader. We all appreciate working with the parents who have shown they care. They can be tremendously helpful in so many ways.

The parents we must reach, however, are the parents of the dropouts—or the potential dropouts. These are the parents who almost never come near the schools. They often have few coping mechanisms themselves. They frequently deal daily with unpleasant realities. But they're frequently fearful and justifiably fearful of reality, or they are genuinely shy, or they haven't the language skills to communicate, or they're too uninformed to ask for the help they so desperately need, or when they do ask for help, they get answers which to them are totally unrealistic.

I, for one, think they care. Most care very deeply for their families. What they don't know is how to implement their



dreams, how to persuade their children to stay in school, how to encourage them in the face of their very bleak lifestyles.

There is a lot of worldwide interest in the astounding work of Mother Theresa and her determined and successful efforts to help the poor. In invoking the vow of poverty for her order, she repeatedly explains that it is necessary to be poor to understand the poor.

Teachers can't be expected to live in the lifestyles of their pupils, of course. But it is absolutely necessary for each of us to understand the mindset of the dropout and the dropout's family before we can help a student turn his or her back on the dropout option. For that understanding, we have to go to the parents and persuade the parents to come to work with us. We have to include those parents in our planning to prevent our own going astray. All the good intentions in the world won't keep kids in school. Good intentions plus understanding plus sound planning plus action will solve the problem.

Getting to know the families of potential dropouts may, indeed, be the greatest challenge we face, that and finding the state dollars right now to implement some programs. But the rewards should be worth every effort expended. It is with these families that some research and some outreach must be done if we are to jar loose the statistics and significantly reduce the number of dropouts.

School and family interaction is as essential an ingredient of the solution as it was in the founding of our public education system. I urge you to consider this factor as you deliberate today.

I must tell you again how pleased I am that you have come to Texas Tech to report on the progress in your districts and to learn from the experiences of others. It is through this kind of sharing and cooperation that Texas will one day be able to provide models for the rest of the nation. We can be confident that we are not facing a hopeless task when we have people as dedicated as you are working to solve it.

Thank you for coming. I shall look forward to hearing of your successes.

# **Panel Discussion: Approaches to Dropout Problems**

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## **LUBBOCK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **E. C. Leslie**

I'm going to try to outline very quickly three of the things we're doing in the Lubbock Independent School District, not going into detail, but possibly giving you some ideas that you may want to question later or even implement. The first of these three things is our Dropout Task Force, the second is the research that we're attempting to do, and the third area is some programs we are attempting that we believe will have some impact on the problem. We firmly believe that solving the dropout problem is not a destination; it's a journey.

Let me start with some background on our task force and where we hope to go with it. After this meeting, two years ago, in March of 1985, we figured out the attrition rate of students in Lubbock from the eighth grade through the twelfth grade from 1981 through 1985. We saw that we were making progress, but still, the attrition rate that we had in Lubbock was a tragedy.

We have cooperated with the IDRA in their studies, and their studies do confirm that our attrition rate seems to be that which we identified. We presented the information to our board of trustees in March of 1985 in a public meeting so that all of Lubbock knew, by ethnic group, what our attrition rate was.

Then we asked our board to appoint a task force to study this problem. They appointed a task force of some 48 citizens from Lubbock, a good cross-section of this community, with Lauro Cavazos chairing the committee, which was then divided into four subgroups. First was a student subcommittee to determine and research the characteristics of students who are at high risk to drop out. We asked them to review research data (empirical data from school district records and interviews with students). Hermán García is serving as the chairman of that particular

subcommittee. We have a second subcommittee on families, asking them to study the family history of student dropouts. They also reviewed research data and empirical data from the community of Lubbock, including interviews. And we have Mrs. Jan Cummings, one of our PTA and parent leaders in our community, to chair that committee. We have a school subcommittee to study how the curriculum meets the needs of high-risk dropout students and to review research data and the Lubbock curriculum to make suggestions for alternative programs. The fourth subcommittee is the community subcommittee, which is headed by Butch Thomas, one of our high school principals. The school committee is chaired by Bob Ewalt, Vice President for Student Affairs here at Texas Tech University.

Those subcommittees have been meeting on a regular basis since October 1985. They have just recently conducted three town hall meetings, where the community was asked to give input. Those committees are now preparing their first report. We are hoping that that report will be made to the Board of Trustees in May. We want the committees to continue to work thereafter. We hope to receive some recommendations that we can implement in the 1987-88 school year. We see this as a long-term involvement, and have so indicated to those people who are members of the task force.

The second area that I want to mention is research we're attempting to do. We have done the attrition study mentioned earlier, but we are also trying to make sure that we're dealing with real data—and I think that's one of the points that Dr. Cavazos made—is to make sure we're using consistent data. We approached the community saying that we had become socially mature enough to stop pointing fingers and trying to blame each other, and instead, actually look at the facts and do something about the problem. In a cooperative effort with Texas Tech University, we funded two graduate assistantships for the College of Education. They, in turn, gave us two research assistants to work 20 hours per week for us on research.

First, we examined the exit-level TEAMS test to try to determine if we would be able to identify early those who are at high risk to fail the exit-level TEAMS. At the 90 percent level, they were able to predict what the test scores were going to be by criteria that we could identify in the ninth grade. We could then begin to do remediation work. That's not soon enough to work with dropouts, but we felt that that was an immediate problem

that we had to face to try to help people graduate. So we are now taking those same graduate assistants and doing research on criteria at the fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade levels, so that we can identify high-risk students. For the last two years, we have been able to identify by name those students classified as potential dropouts.

We are also looking at what happens to those students who fail the TEAMS exit-level test. Our preliminary report finds that 50 percent of those who fail it two times during the eleventh grade do not return to the twelfth grade. So we're attempting to determine what the TEAMS exit test is, in fact doing, to cause more students to drop out. We're also researching the effect of the *Chapter 75* curriculum.

Another thing that we are doing is to focus on the students who are scoring in the lowest quartile on our achievement tests. Not only at the central office, but also on each campus, we are requiring that principals keep a graph of their test scores and note those who are scoring in the lowest quartile. We believe that will make a long-term difference in dropout problems.

Finally, some programs we're attempting. The first one started only three weeks ago. It has been appropriately titled WINGS. (Our people are always coming up with these acronyms, and I can't keep all of them straight, but WINGS stands for Winners in New Growth Situations.) We have identified 50 students who we believe are high-risk dropout students at the fifth grade. We advertized for and received lots of applications from teachers in our system who wanted to be a part of this program to develop a curriculum that would rejuvenate these students into the same enthusiasm for learning that they had when they first came to school. We have asked five teachers to return to us a year from now with a curriculum that will be identified specifically for those 50 students who are at high risk of dropping out.

Another thing we've tried to do is put an emphasis on early ages. We firmly believe that we're talking about a journey, not a destination, and we're going to have to start at a very early age if we're really going to have any impact on this. We started a program that is called PEP, Primary Enrichment Program. On all 23 elementary Chapter 1 campuses, we have reading teachers to work with those students who show developmental lags in reading at the first grade. We have trained these teachers specifically for this intervention, even including Alpha Phonics, a beginning reading program that deals with the dyslexic child.

We've also tried to do some things with parent relationships. I think two of these have been particularly significant. One is a GOALS program; GO for Academic Learning Success is the acronym. We began this three years ago. We dismiss elementary schools for a half day, three times during the first four weeks of school, and reserve time for there to be a 30-minute conference between parents and the teacher as the school year begins. This past year, we had more than 16,500 conferences between parents and teachers (a 94 percent completion rate) during the first four weeks of school where for 30 minutes nothing was done but talk about what we want to do with your child during this year. And we believe that it has opened the doors to many parents to come into our schools who originally would not come to school. Our teachers did an excellent job; many times they had to go into the homes in order to complete these conferences.

Another thing that we're trying right now is that we have appointed four family liaison people to four of our schools. Their responsibility will be to be in each home of that school during the year. We just started this at midterm to see if it can have some effect.

We also are working with our community in attempting to get things into the newspaper. We have been successful getting sponsors to print honor roll students' names in the paper, also.

These are just some of the things that we're attempting to do that we really believe will impact the dropout problem. As we get into the discussion period, if I need to go into detail on any of them, I'll be glad to do that.

## YSLETA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### R. Jerry Barber

I became very interested in school dropouts 22 years ago when I took a job at the Gary Job Corps Center in San Marcos, Texas. I was only 10 years old at the time [laughter]. President Johnson had signed legislation that focused the resources of the federal government on many problems when he was fighting the War on Poverty, and one of the problems identified almost 25 years ago was the dropout problem. At that time, I learned that many of our young people were not being served by our public schools, and because of a variety of reasons, were choosing to drop out of the public schools. Subsequently, these young people severely

limited their opportunities to participate in the American dream. It's estimated that school dropouts will earn \$150,000 less during their working lives than students who earn high school diplomas. Also, as far as cost to our society, school dropouts cost Texas as much as \$17 billion yearly—you heard that earlier. They also constitute 85 percent of our prison inmates, another very significant cost.

Being a school dropout is not only a life-long problem for the individual and his or her family, it is also a serious problem for our society. Unless we can do something to reduce the number of dropouts, the quality of life as we know it in the United States of America will decrease for all of us.

Let me tell you a little about the Ysleta Independent School District. Ysleta comprises the eastern one-third of the city of El Paso. We have approximately 50,000 students enrolled at 48 different campuses. Seventy-seven percent of our students are Mexican Americans, 19 percent are Anglo, and 4 percent are black and other. Most of our students are economically disadvantaged. Of the almost 50,000 students in our district, 26,600 qualify for free and reduced-price lunches—that's 55 percent of our student population. Almost 9,000 students in the Ysleta district are limited English proficiency students. Also, the Ysleta district is a property-poor district, with only about \$81,000 of property value per student. That compares with a statewide average of \$250,000 per student. Ours is also a growing district. While our percentage of growth has dropped, we did gain last year, for a 2 percent growth rate.

Our greatest asset is the quality and the dedication of our staff and our teachers. For some reason, we have been able to assemble a very dedicated group of people, who are highly trained, and very caring. We have been able to equal or exceed the state TEAMS test average in our upper grades, although we are below the state average in the lower grades and are working on that. We are conscientiously stressing the academic program. We believe that all, and I must stress *all*, children can learn. We are proud of what we have accomplished to date. But we, as do the rest of you, have problems. Our dropout rate for 1985-86 in grades 7 through 12 was 6.9 percent. Our best estimate in Ysleta is that our overall dropout rate for grades 7 through 12 is about 30 percent, which corresponds for the figures that I've seen for the state of Texas (from 33 to 35 percent) and estimates for Hispanic children (45 percent). So while we are certainly not satisfied with a 30 percent

dropout rate (three out of ten children dropping out of school), we feel that we are doing a few things right.

What I want to share with you today is information about some of the programs we have implemented that have contributed to lowering our dropout rate. We're of the opinion that students drop out of school for a number of reasons. We believe the major causes are lack of academic success, teenage pregnancy (in El Paso County last year there were 1,600 teenage pregnancies recorded. We believe that about 400-500 of those girls were our Ysleta students), economic hardship, and discipline problems in school. I might mention that some kids are not dropouts; they're pushouts, as I know the people in this audience realize. I'm not proud of it, but I will admit that in my teaching career, I had some problem students who made my day a little better when they didn't come to school. If you've taught school, you know that when you're handling 150 kids a day and spending an inordinate amount of your time with a few of those kids, when they don't come to school, everyone is not displeased. Well, we're working on changing that attitude; we're working on stressing the importance to each and every one of our teachers and to our administrators that we will provide help for those kids, but let's keep them in school. Let's don't push them out; let's don't *let* them out.

One of the things that I haven't written down but that I'd like to institute when we get back home is to refuse to let the kids drop out of school. When they come to see the principal or the counselor, tell them, "No, you can *not* quit."

The principal at Riverside High School was telling me a story about a 16-year-old girl who came to school with her older sister, and her older sister's young child, to drop out of school. The principal got the two sisters together with the young child and said, "No, you can't; you can't drop out." And they said, "We can't? Why not? We thought we could. I'm 16, years old." And he said, "No, you can't drop out." Well, that girl went home and told her parents, "I can't drop out of school." (We suspect that the parents were encouraging the girl to drop out of school to help babysit the other girl's daughter. As bad as that might seem, that's a reality.) Well, we had a happy ending to that one. The girl came back to school, and the last I heard, she was still in school simply because a principal refused to let her drop out of school and told her, "You can't do it." It worked that time. I suspect that the reason it worked is that it gave the younger kid



some support (the one who perhaps was receiving some encouragement from her family to drop out and help out at home). She was able to tell her sister and her mother, "I can't drop out, the principal won't let me." Well, I'm not completely naive; I know that that might not work all of the time, but I think it is a way to approach *some* of these kids.

Another factor contributing to dropouts is that some kids are never really a part of school; they don't participate in it. We know that the majority of kids who drop out of school never participate in any extracurricular activities.

In Ysleta, we've developed a number of programs to address those major causes and to help reduce the number of dropouts. I won't be able to speak to all of them, but I have listed some that I think are working. We have a number of standard programs such as the tutorial program, which is required of every school district in Texas, and was a part of House Bill 72. Some people still bemoan and criticize House Bill 72 for its innovations and the extra work, but I think the tutorial program is an excellent part of the legislation. Academic tutoring in Ysleta is provided for 3,200 students every six weeks. I'm confident the small student-tutor class size has helped these kids improve their academic performance.

As to special efforts, we have a dropout re-entry program. This was decided and determined by a number of our people, primarily, I think, by our Director of Guidance and Counseling, Dr. Judy Lewis. Our counselors, teachers, and administrators have worked very hard to get those kids who have dropped out of school to come back in to school. So far, in two years, we've had 300 high school students return to school. I can happily say that 26 of those kids have received a diploma—in just two years. We identify the ones who have dropped out, and they are mailed a brochure, and invited to come back. We tell them we want them back, and we hold a special registration for them in the evenings.

Another program that increases the possibility of keeping kids in school is the middle school concept, which I'm sure many of you have in your schools. Two years ago, the Ysleta Independent School District committed itself to implementing a middle school concept for seventh and eighth graders. We believe that kids that age are among the most likely to drop out of school. We work with our elementary and middle schools in making the transition from the sixth and seventh grade go as smoothly as possible for the students. We have evening programs for the students and their

parents. Sixth graders come to the middle school to visit with the teachers, administrators, counselors, and other students, where they can familiarize themselves with what to expect when they move into junior high or middle school. Part of this concept includes block scheduling, which helps ease the transition from the self-contained classroom to the departmentalized situation. Each student is scheduled in a block where a group of teachers—a language arts teacher, a science teacher, a mathematics teacher, a social studies teacher—all work with the same students. Then the teachers will meet and talk about the problems the students are having. We believe that provides better individualized attention for those kids.

Another important part of the middle school concept in Ysleta is a daily 20-minute advisory period. This is for the 13-, 14-, unfortunately sometimes 16-year-old eighth graders. During the advisory period, the teachers work with students on self-esteem, improving their self-concept. They discuss the importance of success and why students should feel good about themselves. We've worked hard on this. The intramural program also is a part of the middle school concept where kids participate in checkers, table tennis, chess, soccer, volleyball—anything to get them involved with other kids, and to feel a part of the school.

We also deal with issues such as drug awareness, alcohol abuse, parent-child relationships, peer relationships, and others. This past summer we also operated a tuition-free school all at one campus. It was called a Summer Opportunity School. This past year, the Summer Opportunity School had 300 overage, underachieving seventh to ninth-grade students. (When I say overage and underachieving, that is, kids who are two or more years behind.) I'm happy to report that almost all of those 300 were able to finish the Summer Opportunity School and be placed at a more appropriate grade for their age.

Another effort we believe holds great promise is a university Mother-Daughter program for sixth-grade students. Presently, 40 mothers and daughters from two of our schools participate, and these are two of our most economically depressed schools. The girls work with their mothers and our faculty and administrators on a monthly basis trying to build their expectations for attending college. We work with the University of Texas at El Paso on this program, and we have mentors assigned to each of these kids.

We have a Project Redirection, which is designed to assist pregnant students and those who are parents to remain in school. This is a cooperative program with the YWCA. Again, each girl works with a mentor to provide her counseling and assistance in day-to-day problems. We also have what's called a YOU Program for Excellence. YOU (Y-0-U) stands for Youth Options Unlimited. This program works around a federally aided housing project where we go into the housing project and work with the kids. We provide tutoring from other students. Many of the academically successful students who come out of those housing projects and go to college come back and work with our younger students in providing academic counseling, and I think most importantly, personal counseling.

Well, I've talked (I would say briefly, but I'm running over time) about some of the specific efforts in Ysleta to address the dropout problem. Essentially, we're working very hard with staff members to have them adopt an attitude that they make a difference. They make a difference in the lives of all students in regard to helping them decide to stay in school. We want our teachers and our administrators to be committed to going an extra mile in helping these young people receive the education to which they are entitled. I'm very proud of our effort and our resolve, and I say to you that we have just begun.

## DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Rosita Apodaca

I certainly think that our school district is moving toward trying to do something about this very big problem that we have. The dropout issue in Texas is of national concern, as well as of concern in our state and in our city. I think that our business people in Dallas are very, very much aware that we must move to do something drastic. When you consider that the Dallas Independent School District is second highest [in percentage of dropouts] in the state, to say that the situation is shocking, unacceptable, and embarrassing is an understatement.

A recent editorial in the *Dallas Morning News* challenged the district to redouble its efforts to stop this hemorrhage of students. Four major areas for improvement were cited. At the top of the list was bilingual education, drug education and prevention, followed by the counseling program, and the extension of person-

to-person teaching (tutoring). The district will need to do more than that (and we certainly know that) to improve and to stop the slippage of our students. Nevertheless, heightened concern has caused the district to begin to implement special programs to address the dropout rate, including a \$250,000 study to track reasons for the high Hispanic dropout rate.

First, I would like to share some background information about the dropout problem. Then I will provide some thoughts regarding conflicts in education and the relationship to the dropout problem. I will not, however, discuss the technical aspects of the Dallas dropout study design, since the principal investigator, Maria Robledo, is here, and she will discuss them briefly during her presentation.

Dallas' department of research estimates the district's student dropout rate to be in the neighborhood of 47.6 percent for Hispanics, 31.4 percent for blacks, and 12.1 percent for whites. This amounts to an overall dropout rate of about 28.8 percent of a given ninth-grade class across a four-year period. Realizing that the most acute dropout problems occur among Hispanic students (the percentage of dropouts being sufficiently high to rank as the number one impediment to the education of Hispanic students in the district), Dallas has contracted with the Intercultural Development Research Association, known in Texas as IDRA, of San Antonio for \$250,000 over a 30-month period to provide the following services: (1) work with the district's Department of Research, Evaluation, and Audit to develop or modify a methodological definition of the dropout for the Dallas ISD, (2) implement and develop methods to study the Hispanic dropout, including follow-ups or longitudinal designs with appropriate statistical sampling techniques, (3) follow up presumed dropouts and document their educational status, (4) develop a profile of the Hispanic dropout, identifying factors (social and economic and others) related to the process that results in attrition, (5) develop a turnkey system for items 2, 3, and 4 for implementation in the Department of Research, and (6) develop policy recommendations for instructional, administrative, and budgetary considerations for the retention of Hispanic students in the district. The development of a demonstrable attrition intervention model should be a legitimate outcome of this study.

This is an ongoing study with interim reports scheduled every six months, and I think two have been provided to date. The final report is due on September 10, 1988. The district will act

throughout the period of the study on the basis of interim reports. This research study, though important, is only one of the numerous programs that the district has implemented to address the dropout problem.

Specifically, other initiatives to combat the dropout problem include for instance, in-house suspension centers at the cost of \$3.5 million per year. For 1986-87, the district will supplement these centers with an off-campus school community guidance center at a cost of an additional \$2 million. A community-and-schools project concentrates on treating the dropout problem in three high-percentage Hispanic schools, with Southwestern Bell giving us one of its administrators to serve as director. A new discipline-management system concentrates on keeping students in school. A metropolitan alternative high school is specifically designed to address the dropout problem. An evening academic high school provides those students who must work during the day an opportunity to continue their academic education in the evenings.

We find that Hispanic parents do care about education, and they want their children to stay in school, but many single-parent families have no means of providing the very basic needs, and in those instances, all the encouragement in the world isn't going to help. What we have to do is find ways to modify the institution to meet the needs of these young students, and we think that the evening academic high school is one way.

The alternative vocational high school is another. It solicits dropouts to return to school to pursue a vocational course. In 1985-86, 300 dropouts were targeted. The district also helped them find jobs so that they could stay in school. They worked during the day and went to school at night. We find that many Hispanic students are under-represented in work-study programs, and we need to target on those students and find them jobs. There is also a special school attached to the health professions magnet school that is designed to provide both academic and health services to keep pregnant girls from dropping out of school (Dallas has a very high pregnancy rate). Infant child care is also provided throughout this program. We have 15 high-intensity language training centers and 13 intensive English-to-Speakers-of-Other-Languages centers at the middle school and high school level. These centers address the language and academic needs of the limited English proficiency student in the district. We have approximately 3,000 limited English proficiency

students at the secondary level, with a total of 18,000 in the district. The high-intensity language training center modifies but does not dilute the curriculum, and it modifies the *entire* curriculum. (I was very happy to hear Dr. Leslie say that they were looking for a different curriculum for their youngsters, because what we often do is give them more of the same, and it's certainly not what they need.) We need to introduce this curriculum at the appropriate language proficiency level and make it comprehensible to the students.

The strengths of the students instead of the weaknesses must be identified in order to develop successful learning experiences. We want to build on the self-concept of students, but yet we classify them as limited-English-proficiency. An expanded counseling program at the elementary level is also in effect. We have a bilingual immersion program model in one of our schools with the highest concentration of Hispanic students, trying out new methodologies for working with the young children. We have expanded our prekindergarten program that is required by the state to 2,500 on 48 campuses. We have intensive service teams from our psychological department to help with students who are highly at risk. We have Southwest Dallas Superlearning Centers, centers that are equipped with additional resources to help these students who are also at risk. A parent-teacher conference night is set aside with incentives for teachers so that we can meet with the parents on a one-to-one basis. We have parent ombudsmen who visit in the home to have parent outreach services. Our total middle school program will be revamped to be more in line with the needs of the youngsters in an effort to try to keep them in school. We also have a teacher training program, a very intensive teacher training program in our bilingual education and ESL pre-K through 12 effort in order to help our teachers become more sensitive to the needs of the limited-English-proficiency students. We have also purchased additional materials that are more relevant to these youngsters, since what is usually available in schools is not enough. We have spent \$2.2 million on our teacher training and materials effort. We have a teacher aide training program in the schools right now for our 204 bilingual/ESL teacher aides as part of an Arco foundation grant in order to improve the instruction that reaches those youngsters and in order to recruit from that field, teachers for bilingual education, since they are in great shortage. (We have only 300 of the 600-700 teachers that we need in the Dallas Independent School District.)



We also have work/activity centers designed to keep handicapped students in school until they learn a marketable skill.

We have a diversity of programs, and we're looking for new ones. On Wednesday, we take before our school board a program for newcomers designed to address the needs of newly arrived immigrant students. We project that that center will have approximately 800 secondary students, that is, middle school and high school students. And we hope to address all of those areas that have been identified as causing the dropout and target those areas so that we can help those youngsters in school. We have special counseling services designed for them, and we have started a parent outreach program by hiring community specialists who work with parents and bring them to the school. We will have work-study programs for them, but we will also have a high academic program, because I think we have to keep our expectations high and not just work to keep them in the lowest track of our school district.

I think that the challenge for our school district and others in Texas will be to maintain and continue building these special programs in the light of the austere financial conditions. We are without a permanent solution, and our state dislikes increased taxes. So long as the situation remains that way, we will, as Harold Hodgkinson says in his report, continue to be the most unpredictable state in the nation. I hope that here today we can address and share so that we can continue to find solutions to these problems.

## **WESLACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Mary Garcia**

Project AME, Achievement + Motivation = Excellence, is a dropout prevention program that was recently funded under Title VI of the Education for Economic Security Act. One hundred twenty projects covering various topics were funded nationally with two Texas projects receiving grant awards. In its early stages of implementation, this project is being received with a great deal of enthusiasm by teachers, students, administrators, and parents.

Weslaco, Texas, is a rural community in the Mid-Rio-Grande Valley and is located approximately 30 miles from the southern tip of Texas and six miles north of the Rio Grande and the

Mexican border. Founded in 1919, Weslaco is primarily an agribusiness community.

Weslaco has undergone steady growth and change, and today, has a population in excess of 20,000. The metropolitan area in which Weslaco is located ranks 273rd of 273 areas in the U.S. in per capita income according to the U. S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (1979). Weslaco's unique feature is that it has the second largest concentration of migrant households in Texas. A recent survey identified nearly 5,000 migrants in some 875 households in the city proper. Some 57 percent of the families in Weslaco are below the median income with an unemployment rate of 20 percent. Approximately 87 percent of the school population of 11,000 are on free or reduced lunch.

The Weslaco ISD encompasses 54 square miles in the southwest section of Hidalgo County. It has the largest payroll in Weslaco, employing 625 professionals and 300 paraprofessionals. The district experiences a constant influx of Mexican citizens who often establish residency and send their children to school. Almost 95 percent of the student population have Spanish surnames, and of these, 90 percent come from homes where Spanish is the predominant language spoken. The school enrollment fluctuates dramatically throughout the year due to its large migrant population (59 percent). Weslaco's residents support the educational program of the schools and desire to continue to provide excellent educational opportunities for young people.

Mary Hoge Junior High School, which is comprised of seventh and eighth grades has an enrollment that fluctuates from 1,400 in early fall to 1,700. The school also houses 85 teachers, 37 paraprofessionals, 1 teacher leader, and 1 in-school-suspension instructor. The administrative staff includes 1 principal and 3 assistant principals.

A basic curriculum reflecting *Chapter 75* and House Bill 72 requirements is offered to all students, while a wide range of special course offerings meets the needs of the special populations from remedial to gifted and talented. Vocational education courses in which students may enroll include general construction, general mechanics, and home and community services. Remedial classes in reading and mathematics are offered for students not performing satisfactorily in these subject areas. Emphasis is given to skills mastery and the objectives of the new state-mandated TEAMS test. An ESL (English as a Second



Language) program is provided for recent immigrants who speak little or no English. The program provides LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students with the opportunity for an oral language development sequence, which is followed by development of skills in reading writing, and English grammar. For students who meet the criteria, a gifted and talented program is offered through the science, social studies, and language arts classes.

The school has involved the community in its activities and enjoys a healthy working relationship with community members who are committed to helping to provide and improve the education for students.

The goal of the AME Project is to improve student achievement and motivation resulting in the reduction of dropouts as students progress from junior high to high school. Currently, the dropout rate over the four-year period from ninth to twelfth grades in the Weslaco I.S.D. is approximately 45 percent.

The objectives for the project are:

1. To familiarize teachers with current research findings in the areas of effective teacher behaviors, parent involvement, and student achievement and motivation.
2. To provide opportunities for teachers to apply and evaluate research findings in their classrooms.
3. To improve teaching skills through practice, feedback, and coaching.
4. To seek out exemplary programs emphasizing student achievement and motivation.
5. To train selected teachers at the junior high level in the teacher/advisor model.
6. To provide training in cooperative learning techniques.

As an outgrowth of the recent national focus on education, former Secretary of Education, Terrell Bell, at the National Forum on Excellence in Education in Indianapolis, Indiana, identified four performance goals to be the national focus for the next five years. Three of these goals are student related and include: (1) increased graduation requirements, (2) improved SAT/ACT scores, and (3) a reduction in the high school dropout rate.

A report recently released by the National Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics noted that 40 percent of Hispanic students who leave school, do so before reaching the

tenth grade and that the dropout rate for Hispanics nationally is approximately 45 percent. Educators, faced with effectively addressing these concerns, are seeking ways to develop and implement programs at the national, state, and local level. The AME (Achievement + Motivation = Excellence) Project responds to the challenge by implementing and documenting successful school improvement practices at Mary Hoge Junior High relative to student motivation, achievement, and teacher/student/parent relationships in an effort to provide the support and incentive for more students to complete high school successfully.

Poor student achievement and motivation, as well as high dropout rates, with little or no trend toward improvement, are being reported with alarming frequency for Hispanic youths across the nation, in Texas, and Weslaco I.S.D. Dropout rates are reported to be 45 percent for Hispanic students nationally and approximately 45 percent in the Weslaco I.S.D. These staggering statistics, coupled with the fact that Hispanics will become the majority population in many key areas by the year 2000, make addressing these priorities critical for the future of not only Hispanic youth, but the nation in general.

Project AME is carefully documenting processes, techniques, strategies, activities, and outcomes at each stage of implementation. Reports, presentations, and formal or informal sharing sessions are being planned to communicate specific ideas and activities used in reviewing and implementing research findings. These documents will provide the profession with practical, validated procedures for improving student achievement, motivation, and student/teacher/parent relationships through an increased use of effective teacher behaviors and related research resulting in an enhanced opportunity for student learning through a reduction of the dropout rate for students.

This project will also contribute to the effective schools research in terms of documenting those effective teacher behaviors and teaching strategies found to contribute to increased student motivation and achievement in a school with predominantly Hispanic enrollment. The process for disseminating the current research findings through experience, and offering suggestions for how to implement research, by helping teachers conceptualize specific ways to use the knowledge gained in improving their own teaching skills and thus creating favorable environments for students will also be a primary contribution in linking research and practice.

Weslaco ISD is committed to providing quality and equitable educational programs for *all* of its students. The underlying assumption of this project is that as a school, we have the power to influence what happens to our students, not only in achievement, but also relative to their continued enrollment in school. In this context, we propose to improve the quality of schooling related to teaching behaviors, parent involvement, student achievement, motivation, cooperative learning, and student teacher relationships.

Student discipline, attendance requirements, and mastery of essential elements are part of the state educational reforms represented in Texas' House Bill 72. It has been a statewide concern that implementation of more rigorous educational reforms will result in an even more dramatic dropout rate for minority students. We intend to address this issue creatively, systematically, and openly, with the resolve that we will become more successful with an increasing number of students. We are focusing on the implementation of effective research-based practices, validated by teachers in the Weslaco ISD to achieve this goal.

The quantitative data being analyzed include: (1) student achievement results, (2) student attendance, and (3) student dropout rates. These statistics will be reported for the junior high (7-8), the immediate target school, and the high school.

There were 783 eighth graders at the end of the 1985 school year. Of these 783 students, 266 (34 percent) were recommended for Fundamentals of Mathematics, a remedial course, 192 (25 percent) were scheduled for Consumer Mathematics, another low level course. Some 21 percent (161) were enrolled in Pre-Algebra. Only 148 students were prepared for Algebra I and 20 for Advanced Algebra.

The National Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics cites the following:

- By their senior year, Hispanics had taken the least number of academic courses of any group, according to 1982 analyses by the National Center for Education Statistics.
- More than three-quarters of the Hispanics who took the "High School and Beyond" achievement tests in 1980 and 1982 scored in the bottom half nationally of those tested.
- Some 40 percent of Hispanic high school students in the 1980 "High School and Beyond" study were in a general-education track as opposed to a strong academic course of

**Table 1**

*Student Achievement Data: Metropolitan Achievement Test Spring 1985 Norms by Grade Level*

Reading	Math	Language	Reading	Math	Language
7th			10th		
N 789	N 787	N 788	N 547	N 548	N 548
SS 743	SS 733	SS 720	SS 792	SS 788	SS 783
%ile 46	%ile 50	%ile 44	%ile 40	%ile 40	%ile 44
8th			11th		
N 784	N 783	N 777	N 470	N 469	N 470
SS 768	SS 762	SS 747	SS 808	SS 799	SS 806
%ile 46	%ile 52	%ile 42	%ile 42	%ile 50	%ile 48
9th			12th		
N 693	N 693	N 695	N 413	N 412	N 442
SS 793	SS 781	SS 771	SS 822	SS 807	SS 818
%ile 52	%ile 52	%ile 46	%ile 38	%ile 48	%ile 46

study. Thirty-five percent were in the vocational-education track.

It is interesting to note that the number of students tested at the seventh grade was 789 and yet only 413 students were tested at the twelfth grade. While these numbers do not reflect the same class traced over time, the following report does reflect a significant number of students who drop out particularly between the freshman and sophomore year.

The freshman class enrollment in January 1982 was 816; as sophomores in January of 1983, enrollment had dropped to 493; by their junior year, there were 456 students with 469 students enrolled in January 1985 as seniors. This represents a 39.5 percent dropout rate between the freshman and sophomore years, 7.5 percent from the sophomore to junior, and +2.8 percent between the junior and senior year. Cumulatively, this represents a dropout rate of approximately 44.2 percent for the graduating class. This rate has been prevalent over the past four years. Mid-year enrollments are used to control for the large numbers of migrants, many of whom are not enrolled in September or May.

Monthly attendance was charted for the junior high and high school. Schools reported the following percentages:

	Mary Hoge Jr. High	Weslaco High School
September	96.22	96.80
October	95.66	96.97

November	96.26	97.20
December	95.40	96.43
January	90.53	93.13
February	93.06	93.94
March	94.76	94.93
April	94.76	95.08
May	94.66	96.12

It is our belief that while students drop out at the high school level, it is imperative that we begin to address the concern at the junior high level. The cumulative effect of low achievement, lack of motivation, a lower positive self-concept, and lack of sense of efficacy is overwhelming. These factors manifest themselves in continued failing grades, a negative attitude toward school, a low academic self-concept, and a reduced sense of control over performance. These factors result in students dropping out at 16. Many of these 16-year-olds are still in junior high. The National Commission on Secondary Schooling reports that 25 percent of the Hispanics who enter high school are overage. This current year, Weslaco "placed" 56 students, who were between 16 and 19 years old, at the high school level. An analysis of achievement, attendance, and dropout data would seem to point to a need to address the issues of student achievement and motivation in order to encourage students to continue school until graduation. The statistics indicate that for the students enrolled in Weslaco, attendance is not the major concern. Since this is the case, we must examine current schooling practices and explore alternatives.

Current effective schooling research, cooperative learning techniques, teacher advisor programs, parent involvement, and proven strategies for increasing student motivation are among the resources available in addressing both student achievement and the reduction of the dropout rate. Prevalent in the research on student achievement are the findings on "time" for learning. Allocated time for instruction in each subject area is a part of the new Texas legislation. However, the issues of engaged time, productive tasks, and success rate, found in recent studies, are factors that are related to increasing the possibilities of student achievement. Planning for instruction, classroom management, and teaching strategies that increase this academic learning time for students are among the effective teacher behaviors to be explored. Additional time is being spent examining the effects of

teacher expectations on student achievement, self-concept, and student attitudes toward school.

One of the promising techniques developed at Johns Hopkins University is cooperative learning. This technique sometimes called "Student Team Learning" has been cited as effective in increasing student learning of basic skills. These effects were found to be more dramatic for minority students than for majority students. This approach is also beneficial in that the team learning approach makes use of positive peer pressure to accomplish the team's tasks. This may also include such ancillary concerns, as attendance, motivation, and discipline. Research reports indicate that cooperative learning results in:

- Higher achievement in the mastery of facts, information, and theories taught in school,
- Acquisition of higher level analytical reasoning strategies,
- Higher motivation to achieve by more students striving for mutual benefit and joint effort,
- More positive attitudes toward subject areas (including mathematics, science, and for languages), which in turn generate a continuing motivation to study, to take advanced courses, to learn more about the area, to enter related careers,
- Greater competencies in working effectively with other people in career family, and community settings,
- Greater integration of caring and supportive relationships with other students, including stronger friendships, a sense of psychological support and safety, and conviction that peers support and encourage one's effort to learn, and
- Greater psychological stability, health, and well-being, including positive self-esteem and a sense of autonomy.

Articles in *Education Week* (December 1984) report that a major cause of low achievement for Hispanics is a lack of sustained contact with adults who can act as personal role models for students. The Commission on Secondary Schooling for Hispanics recommends that schools increase opportunities for students to develop close supportive relationships with adults to help with achievement and to decrease the high dropout rate.

Project AME includes an examination of the teacher/advisor model as a means of providing a nurturing, supportive environment for students during the school day. Homeroom assignments with a few students per teacher meeting on a regular basis to discuss student concerns are to be considered. In this

setting, teachers are able to act in an advisory capacity discussing concerns related to academics, attendance, future plans, and present problems. An advisory group consisting of parents, teachers, students, and administrators could guide activities of this program. This project has been designed to address the major areas of student achievement and motivation at Mary Hoge Junior High. The objectives of the project address research-based alternatives to present practices. Weslaco I.S.D. has the reputation of a district that is constantly seeking to improve the education opportunities for students. There has been a long-range plan for curriculum development. This concern for instruction has been addressed systematically at the elementary grades. School improvement efforts at the local level include increased student achievement as measured by criterion-referenced tests, the state's minimum competency tests (TEAMS), and standardized, norm-referenced test data. The report in this document represents an increase from the previous five-year report when 55 percent of the freshmen were below the thirteenth percentile.

Designed to increase the capability of the school's staff to promote student achievement and motivation as an approach to decreasing the dropout rate among the largely Hispanic, migrant student population in the Weslaco I.S.D., the primary beneficiaries of the Project for Hispanic Youth are their parents and the school staff who are responsible for their school-based education.

To achieve the objectives of the Project, the professional staff members at the Mary Hoge Junior High School are participating in a project in which the staff will:

1. Become familiar with current research findings on teaching behaviors and effective schooling practices,
2. Critically evaluate research findings in terms applicability to effective schooling for students in Mary Hoge Junior High School,
3. Analyze their own teaching and school practices in relation to current research findings,
4. Improve their teaching skills and schooling practices by applying the research findings to their classrooms and in the overall program of the school.

The project is designed to overcome one of the major difficulties associated with utilizing research findings as a basis for developing effective schools. Historically, the dissemination of research findings has been the weakest aspect of most major research efforts aimed at improving instruction. Most dissemina-



tion models have relied on the expository mode (verbal and print) to distribute information to teachers. These models are only marginally effective in influencing behaviors and thought processes of the primary consumers of educational research—teachers. To bring about lasting changes, teachers must have the opportunity to confront research findings through experience and the full use of their senses ("one-sense," indirect exposure to research is just not powerful enough to have much impact).

Practitioners must see the research findings as credible in terms of the real world of the classroom; findings must not be presented in ways in which they are perceived by practitioners to be vague and contradictory. Finally, suggestions about *how* to implement research findings in the classroom is a factor often missing in dissemination efforts. Teachers often find it difficult to think of specific things they can do in their classrooms in order to benefit from reported research. They need assistance and support in conceptualizing specific ways to utilize knowledge gained from research to improve their own teaching skills and for creating favorable learning tasks and environments for students.

Researchers at Middle Tennessee State University (Eaker & Huffman, 1982) have refined a technique for funneling research results into schools more effectively. Known as the Consumer-Validated-Research Approach (CVRA), this technique provides a successful process for the dissemination of research findings to practitioners. It also provides a framework for the testing and implementation of research findings in teachers' classrooms. The AME Project draws upon the CVRA model to deliver a staff development program to the professional staff at Mary Hoge Junior High School.

The AME Project utilizes a variety of learning modes (seminars, supportive planning sessions, cooperative learning experience, independent study, and observation of exemplary programs in other school districts). Five topic areas have been tentatively identified for inclusion in the staff development program:

1. Effective school research,
2. Student achievement and motivation research,
3. Cooperative learning research,
4. Parent involvement research, and
5. Teacher advisement programs.

Activities for each of the topic areas will proceed through six steps: (1) gathering and summarizing relevant research findings

(*research production*); (2) communicating research findings to school staff (*awareness*); (3) generation of techniques for applying the research findings in the classroom (*planning*); (4) testing of research findings in the classroom (*teacher testing of research findings*); (5) reflection, judgment, and evaluation of research findings (*validation*); and (6) adoption of selected research findings in the classroom (*classroom implementation*).

Accomplishments expected from the Project by the end of the grant period include the following:

1. Successful completion of the proposed staff development activities for three cohorts of teachers
2. A plan for an initial school wide implementation of a minimum of one selected school improvement practice.
3. A detailed description of the outcomes of the Project, and
4. A description of the process employed for assisting practitioners in examining and applying research findings to improve teaching behaviors and schooling practices in the Mary Hoge Junior High, a process which may serve as a model for other schools to replicate or to adapt.

The dropout rate of Hispanic students in Weslaco I.S.D. has been, and continues to be, of paramount concern to the school's professional staff and parents alike. This project addresses a broad spectrum of factors related to this concern and is, therefore, central to the school's overall improvement plan.

## Reference

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## INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

### Maria "Cuca" Robledo

Over the past year, I have had an opportunity to be intensively immersed in the dropout issue. In May 1986, IDRA entered into a contract with the Texas Department of Community Affairs and the Texas Education Agency for basically three purposes. One was to look at the magnitude of the dropout problem in the state of Texas. How big, really, is the problem? The second was to look at the economic impact of the problem. What is it costing us? What is it costing the state in dollars and cents? And then

thirdly, we wanted to go about looking at what were doing about the problem at that time, the kinds of programs that were out there. From May to October of last year, we engaged in a very intensive research effort that involved school districts, and we are grateful for the very good response that we received on those surveys. We also looked at available data; we looked at census data; we looked at survey data from the Texas Education Agency, and basically, came up with 20 findings that sum up the answers to those three major questions. Dr. Cavazos this morning shared some of those findings with you, and I did bring a few copies of an executive summary-for those of you who have not seen the findings.

As I have been involved in this effort and as I have been talking to people throughout the state over the course of the past few months, it seems to me that we can boil down all of the dropout issues, so to speak, into four problems. They are four problems that are happening simultaneously, I think. And that is what brings us to the critical stage we are in.

Problem number one is that too many young people are leaving school. Too many young people leave school without a high school diploma. We heard the statistics this morning. If you could step back from the statistics and really let it in what it means to say that in the state of Texas, if you are freshman, you have a one in three chance of dropping out. And let it in, in terms of what it actually means, that if you are a Hispanic freshman in the state of Texas, you have one chance in two of dropping out before the fall of your senior year. And further, that if you are a Hispanic dropout in the state of Texas, the odds are one in two that you dropped out before the ninth grade. So we are talking not only about a very big problem with regard to numbers, but also one that needs to be addressed very early, given when our kids are leaving school.

The second problem is that we do not know how to account for our students as they move through our educational system. The very major task that we had ahead of us when we started our research was, how do we count the number of dropouts? If, as we found out from school districts after we surveyed them, 62 percent of school districts did not have a definition of *dropout* and did not have a system for counting dropouts, how do we go about doing that? We chose to do that by looking at attrition rates, which essentially means the number of students over a period of time that you lose from a particular group. And we looked at

1982-83 and again at 1985-86, and compared the figures to adjust for in- and out-migration in the population.

We have had over the course of the past few months quite lively discussions that I have been involved with about whether the figures are appropriate or not, and whether they are reliable or not, and whether they are conservative or not. I think that because our data converge with data that are coming to us from other sources, that we can quite reliably say that in the state of Texas, the attrition rate of 33 percent is a reliable and a conservative estimate.

Let me tell you why I think it's conservative. We did not count anyone who left school before the ninth grade, and we know from other data that we collected that that is significant, especially among Hispanics. We also did not include anyone who left school after the fall of their senior-year, because we used fall survey data, collected during the fall semester. We know from other sources, from William Bennett's "report card" that was issued a couple of weeks ago, that the nongraduation rate in the state of Texas is 36.8 percent and that it puts us forty-third in the country in our ability to graduate our own students from high school. So there is a convergence, I think, of information that allows us to speak quite reliably about the issue at a state level.

Some of you who come from other areas of the state know how lively the discussions have been about that information and whether it is or is not correct. Let me speak to that very briefly and share with you what I think are three distinctions we need to make, three areas that we need to talk about when we're talking about these data. Number one is that there have been discussions that I think have come from a failure to make a distinction about the numbers that we're talking about. In these discussions, which are usually about method, a distinction between annual rate and longitudinal rate is not made, so that some school districts that took exception to the figures that we reported were essentially talking about an annual rate. Our rate, and it's important that you understand this, is a longitudinal rate. It essentially talks about odds, and that is the odds of my getting to a particular grade level. And the odds for Hispanic students in the state of Texas who are freshmen are one out of two. So it's very important that as we talk about what we're going to do from now on that we know what it is that we're talking about. House Bill 72 mandates 5 percent—that the state will reduce the dropout rate to five percent. As it states right now, we don't know if that five

percent is an annual rate, we don't know if it's a longitudinal rate, and we don't know when we'll get there because we don't know how to track students through our system. The efforts that have been reported this morning are exactly the direction that we need to take, and that is for an individual school district, let us count and let us know particular students—when are they dropping out, why are they dropping out, and what are we going to do about it.

The second area as we have been debating numbers and figures, I think, that needs to be focused on is that being human beings, the way we are is that we like to look good. We all do. I would like to look very good standing up here, and that's just the way that we are. I think that when we talk about dropout rates as something that is exclusively the purview of schools, administrators in some cases tend to shy away from the publicity that comes from a very high dropout rate. One of the things that I think is important as we continue those conversations and engage in that discussion, is to realize that the dropout problem is too big to be attributed to any one institution, be that the school, be that the family, or be that the student himself. Dr. Leslie talked about social maturity and the stopping of pointing fingers; I think that that's where we need to go so that we can move on with these discussions.

The third area, and I think the third kind of difference that comes up when we talk about dropouts and how many are there, and what we ought to do—one that to me is very much more frightening than either the question of method or the question of wanting to look good—and that is the fundamental difference in what we value as individuals and as a society. There was an article that appeared in a suburban notebook out of Austin in January, and I'd like to share a little bit from the article because I think it illustrates my point. It's called "Let the dropouts drop." It's a little bit like, "Let them eat cake." The Allstate Independent School District Board of Trustees has finally found a topic on which all of its members can agree: dropout prevention. And they want to spend a lot of money and manpower on it. Why? They then go on to make their point. There are many worthwhile jobs in our society that do not require a high school diploma or even the slightest amount of academic skill. Keeping bodies in school is futile and can be damaging to our students. Dropouts often have deep personal problems that they impose on everyone around them. Many of their fellow students breathe a

sigh of relief when the troublemakers finally drop out. Many dropouts need extensive intervention into their family lives. According to one recent study, Hispanic students, for instance, are handicapped by church, by family, and by ethnic-group peer relationships. Is the school district prepared to undertake a massive Americanization of the general attitudes and lifestyles of local Hispanics? Would it be right or even lawful to do so? "Let the dropouts drop," the article concludes. And I think it's basically a question of what we value individually and as a society, and how that gets reflected into public policy.

The third major problem as I see it is that we do not have in place strategies for dealing with the problems that are of sufficient breadth or of sufficient scope. When we surveyed school districts and agencies across the state to see what was being done about the dropout problem, we found first of all that with respect to the magnitude of the problem, if you based it on that, that there were in fact very few programs. And that the kinds of programs you have been hearing about this morning are, in fact, an exception rather than the rule. There were only 12 percent of school districts that in fact, thought themselves by their own self-report, that they had a dropout prevention program.

The other thing with regard to strategies that I feel is important is that there are not strategies that reflect the complexity of the problem or not enough strategies to do so. The commitment the Dallas Independent School District made to looking at the dropout issue in a longitudinal way, finding out why kids are dropping out, and then developing policies from that, I think reflects where we need to take things from here on out, both in regard to research and with regard to programs. And that is, conceptually, what we have been using—a triad of the school on the one hand, the family and the community on the other, and the student as the third part of that triad. And it's probably the case that in any individual student's life, the decision to drop or not drop out of school has something to do with how the pieces of the triad interact. So in some cases, where the institution is not responsive to the student, it could be the strength of the family and the support that is given by the family that keeps that student in school. In other cases, it's probably the case that where the family is lacking in its ability to support the student in staying in school, then the student is lucky enough to be in a system or to come up with a person who takes it upon himself or herself to keep that student in school by providing that



support. The number of kids who are dropping out is just too big for us to be simplistic about the reasons, either with regard to: they lack motivation, their families don't support them, or in all cases, the schools are not doing their job. That's certainly not the case; it's probably a very complex interaction, and I think that we need to be aware of that as we develop programs—and certainly as we continue conducting research with this.

The fourth problem is that as a society, we are paying too high a price for the dropout problem. The statistics have been quoted—the \$17 billion that the state of Texas is losing for every group of students that drops out. And the key, I think, is that whereas 25 years ago we could stand to have a big portion of our population undereducated or uneducated, we can no longer do that. The economic diversification that must occur in the state of Texas is impossible without an educated work force. I had an opportunity at a conference that we had in San Antonio to talk to a group of businessmen, and their perspective was on business, that in the private sector, when they involve themselves in education, it is really not up to charity or up to philanthropy; in fact, it is their own enlightened self-interest that is wanting them to become involved, and that is requiring that they become involved in this.

Those, I think, are the four major problems, and they are all happening at the same time. There are too many students dropping out, the not knowing how to count them, the not knowing what to do about it, and the fact that the state is losing a lot of money.

Where do we take it from here? Three areas that I think are important: one is we need public policy that supports a full school enrollment model. Dr. Leslie alluded to the elitism that is possible in terms of some of the reform movements. Right now, for the most part, the public policy mandates that we concern ourselves with are placing great emphasis on how kids achieve—but only those kids who are lucky enough or persistent enough to stay in the school system. We are not currently held accountable for those students who leave our school system. And as a superintendent, if I care about how I look in the newspapers when the TEAMS scores come up, the fact that the kids who are at the bottom rung leave my school system is really not such a bad thing. And I don't mean that in an ugly way; that's just the way it is. There are neither incentives nor accountability for all of our students and for school full enrollment models. That's at the



state level. At the local level, I think there also needs to be public policy that supports keeping students in school. We know, for instance, that retention, retaining students in grade one year, increases their chances of dropping out by 50 percent. We know that retaining students in school two or three grades practically guarantees that they will drop out. That has some direct implications, I think, for policy at the local level. There's also research that indicates that the higher the number of transfers out of a campus into another within the same school system, the higher the dropout rate at that particular campus. These are the kinds of things that I think at the local level need to be looked at because, although we've been talking about the dropout rate as sort of generic to a school district, there are in fact wide variations across campuses within a particular school district.

The second thing that I think needs to be addressed in reducing the dropout rate is that we need a research plan and we need a data collection plan to allow us to track students through our school system. If someone wants to know our credit history in this country, all they do is push a button. It is inconceivable that in that same country and with the same kind of technology, we don't know what happens to our kids when they exit one school system and enter another one. I think that's the direction that we need to move in and one that the state is moving toward.

The third need is that we need a strategic plan. As a state, we need a strategic plan in terms of how we're going to address the dropout issue. And with regard to that, I think there are two important things to keep in mind. One is that although we need earlier prevention efforts because kids drop out early in their school life, we do *not* need earlier negative labeling of students. And it's a dilemma, because you want to identify them so that you can serve them, but if you label them earlier, all you are doing is worsening the situation. So I think we have to be in tune with that.

One of the things that IDRA has been involved with over the past two years, with funding from Coca Cola U.S.A., is something that we call the Valued Youth Partnership. The valued youth are high-risk students who are put into a tutoring course, who tutor younger children, and who are paid minimum wage for their services. Because they have to teach younger children, they in fact, do a lot of learning themselves.

When I talk about this program, I get a lot of questions about, Are you talking about teacher aides tutoring, or just who are you

talking about tutoring, because the thought of taking high-risk kids to tutor elementary school children is not a usual one. But I think that the term *valued youth* is really incorporated into that program. I think that all of our strategies and our programs have to come from that valuing of our students.

The second thing that I think we need to keep in mind with regard to the development of our strategic plan is the fact that the dropout problem is a community problem. It truly and absolutely is. I think the causes go beyond schools and certainly the effects go beyond school. I think if we are truly going to make a dent in the problem, it is going to require collaborative effort. That includes the private sector, the public sector, the politicians, and so forth, within a particular community. We have had an opportunity over the course of the past year to work with the Ford Foundation, which helped set up Hispanic education initiatives across the country that include 21 cities in which they are funding the development of collaboratives. *Who*, number one, are looking at *why* are kids dropping out in that particular community, and secondly developing three- to five-year plans in terms of how the community is going to address it.

San Antonio is one city that is included in that effort; there are also Los Angeles, Tucson, and Albuquerque in the Southwest and other cities across the country. The key issue, I think, is the collaboration and the looking toward the future with school people and nonschool people at the same time.

Lastly, I would like to leave you with one thought, and that is that those of us who do research for a living sort of like to look at statistics and formulas and that kind of thing. And there's one that to me makes a lot of sense and it's something like this: if you take on the one hand the *results* that we wish to achieve and to that you add *why not*, that equals the results that we want to achieve. We become very reasonable sometimes when we are given reasons for why not. You go up to a hotel clerk and you ask about your reservation and they don't have it, and you say, "Well, why not?" And they say, "Well, the computer fouled up." And we become very reasonable, and we go, "oh okay." I think in the case of dropouts, there are a lot of reasons *why not*, why we cannot address the problem. There are some parents who don't care, there are some teachers who don't care, there are administrators who don't care, and there are a lot of people who do care. And I think we have to dare to be unreasonable as we think about what's possible for all of our kids.

## QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

**Q:** Are there any statistics available yet on the effect of House Bill 72, especially the after-school tutoring?

**A:** IDRA is right now doing a study like that, and tentatively, it looks like there has been an increase in dropouts over the course of the past few years. There's no specific information with regard to the tutorials.

**A:** We have looked at what it [House Bill 72] has done as far as eliminating electives for some of our students. We do not have research that says that has created the dropout problem. We do have evidence that it has changed the mode of student choices, particularly for those who are dropout risks. For instance, look at the requirement of three years of mathematics for high school graduation. We already have students taking three years of mathematics who need three years of mathematics; the people that that was placed upon are those who are our high risk students.

**A:** To add to that, many of the national educators who have been studying the national reform movement have pointed to tests and have said it is too early to see if House Bill 246 [*Chapter 75, TAC*] and House Bill 72 have had the effect that they anticipated.

**Q:** Dr. Robledo, at the same time that you were commissioned to do your research, Texas A&I was also commissioned to do research essentially on the same topic, is that right?

**A:** At the time that we were commissioned to do the research on the three questions that I mentioned: the magnitude, the cost, and the programs, Prairie View A&M University was commissioned to look at one other question that TDCA [Texas Department of Community Affairs] wanted to look at and that was, What are the causes of kids dropping out of school? And they addressed that issue as a separate contract with TDCA.

# Give Them a Chance and Some Support

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## A PERSONAL ODYSSEY

The Most Reverend Patrick F. Flores,  
Archbishop of San Antonio

I visit high schools (both the private and the public). I love to do so. Generally, when addressing the high school students, I always ask, "Who are the sophomores?" And the sophomores will raise their hands. I always tell them that in any school the sophomores are my favorites. And, of course, I get *yeahs* from them, but I get *boos* from the other ones. Then I tell them that the reason the sophomores are my favorites is that when I myself was a student, I loved the sophomore class so much that I stayed in it for four years. I explain to them that it wasn't that I was flunking, but rather that at the beginning of my sophomore year (and I was barely 15), my father had an accident and was hospitalized. My brothers were all in the service, or married and gone; I was the next oldest at home, so I offered to quit school in order to help my mother support my ailing father. I got a job—in fact, I had three jobs. I used to work during the day at a filling station, a Chevrolet dealer, and at night I used to work at a night club as a dancer and a singer, and on Sunday I used to clean a dance hall, and all of it went to make ends meet. However, the guy I was working with full time started me at \$26 a week. Two years later I was still making \$26 a week. I applied for an increase, and he told me "no way." I started making applications all over the city of Houston, and I used to tell them that I can type 68 words a minute, I'm good at bookkeeping, I can take shorthand, and so on, and then they would ask, "Do you have a high school diploma?" I would say, "No, I don't." Then they would say "You need not apply."

I tried this so often that eventually I said, "I don't want to be making \$26 a week for the rest of my life," and I decided to go back to school. And I always tell the high school students that it's the best decision I ever made. Then I urge them, for the love of

God and for the love of yourself, don't quit school, because you have a chance in this great country of freedom only if you get educated. Otherwise, you're always going to be doing the same thing at the same price with no hope of improvement and no possibilities of growth and of development.

Three or four weeks ago we had an incident in San Antonio of a man who came into one of our church's offices and held two of the secretaries and priests (you probably heard it). For about four hours, the kidnapper held the people there, not demanding money, but just demanding to see his wife, and wanting the church and the policemen to bring the wife to him so he could see her and the baby. He, of course, was granted his request and then was arrested.

The next day, I went to see him in jail because I thought that it was my duty to forgive and not to condemn. The moment that I had comforted him, he hugged me, and he cried. Then he began to tell me what a low self-image he had; it was very, very bad. When he was only 10 months old, his father died, his mother remarried, and the other two elder children somehow adjusted to the stepfather. He didn't; he always felt unwanted. He said his two older brothers did excellent in school, but he was flunking. He said, "When I was in the sixth grade, the counselor told me—and I'll never forget this—'You are never going to amount to anything.' Then she said, 'You ought to look into mechanics, look into carpentry, because you are not going to amount to anything.' There was no mechanics or carpentry in the sixth grade, but they made him bring his bicycle. He would have to disassemble it in the morning and put it back together in the afternoon, and that was the mechanics he had in sixth grade. He told me, 'I graduated from high school, I have a high school diploma. I can fix radiators, but I don't know how to spell it.' He never had to tell me that he really could not read or write. So he said, 'My wife seems to be unhappy with me because I'm at a standstill. My brothers are all going up the ladder, I'm not making headway, and this is why she ran away, but this is why I wanted her back. Because she is the only one, she and my child, are the only ones who love me.'"

I wonder how many kids drop out because counselors tell them, "You'll never amount to anything." I praise the Lord and thank God that my first 10 years in the public schools I had wonderful teachers. I really do, I applaud them, for they were willing to go an extra mile in order to assist me. And this always

reminds me of a little joke that I tell. I was told that some years back, a young nun, just graduated and was going to go to a parish school to teach for the first time in her life. When she got to her assignment, she was told that the first graders were going to be her pupils. And she was determined to be a good teacher, to be friendly, to smile, to be kind. The first day of school, she was doing what teachers must do, taking down names, addresses, telephone numbers if they had one. And she was giving every child a smile. But as she was going down the line, she got to about child number 17, and the sister asked him, "Sonny, what is your name?" And the little boy answered, "Dammit, Sister." And the sister made the silent cross, and said, "No, no we don't talk that way here, so don't use that language around here. I'll just ask you again, What is your name?" And again he said, "Dammit, Sister." She said, "Let me see your birth certificate." And to her amazement, that was his name. You spell it Dhmett, but you pronounce it Dammit. And Sister thought it was going to sound horrible for her to say, "Dammit, sit down; Dammit, get out of the way; Dammit, go home; Dammit, where have you been?" But after a while, she was using Dammit all over the place and thinking nothing of it. Four years later, both of them were in the fourth grade because as the kid passed, the sister was also asked to take the next grade. And their Mother Superior came to inspect the teachers and to see if the kids were learning anything. When she got to the fourth grade, she told the kids, "I am only going to test you in one subject, and it's spelling. I believe that if you're good in geography, you're good in history, and to make it easier, I'll pop a word, and whoever knows it, raise your hand, and I'll let you try it." For 45 minutes the fourth graders did fine. Forty-five minutes later, the Mother Superior was having trouble thinking of fourth-grade words. But she invented a tricky one: unalphabetically. And all the kids tried it, and it was too long, and during the course of dividing it, they missed it. The only one who had not tried it was little Dhmett. He raised his hand to his homeroom teacher and said, "Sister, Sister, c-c-can I try." The Sister was a little bit embarrassed and she said, "Dammit, you know you can't get it." Well the Reverend Mother did not know it was a kid's name. She turned to the sister and said, "Well, hell, Sister, give him a chance." And you know, he got it. He went at it, "un-al-pha-be-ti-cal-ly." But he got it for two reasons: he was given a chance, and he was

given support. And, my brothers and sisters, if there is one message I want to leave with you, it would be that.

I believe after some 30 years of being involved in education, that every child can make it if given a chance and given support. I like to think that every one of us here has made it. But we have made it for that reason, and that reason alone. Somehow we have been given a chance, and we have been given support—something that many kids have not had. Either it has been lacking in the home or the community or the school or wherever. They have not had that, and they will not have it in a sense if they do not have it from you and from me. I made it because I was given the opportunity and I was given support.

I belong to a migrant farming family. In fact, we used to come every year to a little community that is right outside of Lubbock—Abernathy. We used to spend three months picking cotton in that area. We used to leave school the last week of April, and we used to go to school about the first week of December. My first 10 years in school, I passed conditionally, not because I didn't have it up here, but just simply because I did not meet the requirements for passing unconditionally. In the process, I think I opened many a door. There were many schools then that were segregated.

The support that I appreciate and that is essential to every child is, first and foremost, the support of the parents. My mother and father could not read or write. But then they knew how much they were lacking because they didn't have that tool. And they would support us whenever we were home to not miss a day, and to study and to try to catch up. I like to think that the best teachers I ever had were my own parents. The many wonderful things that I learned from them! For one, they taught me to love work, and then to get an education. Second, as I mentioned, from the first through the tenth grade, I did have very committed teachers who were willing to go with us beyond the call of duty. One of the things that I appreciated about our teachers was that they used to visit the homes at least once a year, so they knew the milieu, they knew the surroundings from which we came.

I would hope that our school system in Texas would make it mandatory for every school teacher to visit the home of every one of the children. Very often, teachers give homework, and there is no place to do the homework at home, especially when there are seven or eight kids, and only one table that has to be used to feed



the family in shifts. By the time the feeding is over with, it's just simply too late for the child to start doing homework. The next day, he's accused of being lazy, but he often simply did not have the space to do the studying. My teachers came to visit our homes at least once a year, and knowing what we didn't have, they used to offer us the school. Don't you want to stay after school, not as a punishment, but to do your homework here and we'll help you. I have never forgotten that and never will.

Then I have some friends who gave me a tremendous amount of support, and let me mention one in particular. When I got to the seminary, my father was against that. When I made my point that I was going whether he approved of it or not, we broke our relationship for two years. My mother tried to support me under the table, and I did not accept that. They had been very united, and I did not want to split them up, so I said, "Mama, I won't accept a penny from you if it doesn't come from the two of you." But a nun used to send me 25 cents a month, and she also would tell me, "I am kind of stealing this, because as nuns we're not supposed to have money and to do with it as we see fit." But she used to send me 25 cents, and at that time, that was a lot—I could buy six Cokes a month with 25 cents, but more than that, it was the fact that somebody out there cared, and that support was really the pat on the back that I needed to carry on. However, that nun used to always have a sentence: "You will have to pay back every bit of this when you get ordained." And you know I've been trying to pay it ever since—y no puedo. She used to say, "Not by paying it back to me, but by doing for others what I have done for you."

Now this is no brag, but I just want to share this with you. I have been instrumental in establishing two scholarship funds for Hispanics—not that I'm not interested in others, but I think I need to begin at home. One of them is for those who are interested in the religious life, whether it be a priest, a minister, a nun, a brother or whatever, and we do pretty good there. Secondly, I've established the National Hispanic Scholarship Fund in order to help Hispanics go all the way. By all the way I mean this: with this foundation, we prefer to limit our assistance to students who are already in a master's or a doctoral program. Because I think that we are going to change the dropout, and we're going to change educational attitudes when we have our own at the highest level possible (as president of the university) and when the rest of the community and the barrio can see

models of their own language and of their own color of skin. It is for this reason, and trying to repay that nun, that I have established that fund now. The first year, we only collected \$30,000—we had no credibility, we had no experience. But right now, 12 years later, we are giving \$1.4 million to students in doctoral and master's studies. We hope to be able to make this grow as the number of interested Hispanics throughout the country grows at the particular level.

One other point. A few days ago I attended a conference, at which the speaker was a Jonathan Kozol. (I don't know too much about him because he was one of many participating.) He said something that in a sense alarmed me, shocked me, but I think also challenged me. He asked us to question our pledge of allegiance—not that we should not pledge allegiance to the flag, but should we be saying what we say. We say, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America—one nation, indivisible, under God, with liberty and justice for all." Is that a reality, or is that an ideal? His argument was that it's an ideal, far from becoming a reality. But then he went on to say that we are not one nation indivisible. We are two nations bitterly divided, with liberty for some and illiteracy for others. When he said that, I was the first one to applaud.

I, for one, feel like I am emancipated. I really believe I'm a free human being. I can get around, I can ask questions, I can read signs. But I remember my father crying because once he got a job as a truck driver, and he used to drive from Texas all the way to Georgia, and all the way to Florida, not being able to read one single sign. Now is that liberty when we have individuals in our community who cannot read the basics, who cannot understand, who cannot get around.

Wouldn't literacy be one of the greatest gifts that this country could give all its children? I in no way favor communism; my religious convictions and communism just simply could never jell, but I do admire the fact that every one in that country, whichever it might be, is in school. They do not tolerate dropouts; they just simply won't. Can't we do better, with all the resources we have, and the convictions, and our commitment to liberty and equality for all men and for all women.

As I said, Jonathan Kozol challenged me in what he said. Shortly after hearing him, I read these figures: that nationally we have 27 million functionally illiterate people. And we have 45 million who are marginally illiterate. *Apenitas pueden leer*, they

can barely read. In Texas, there are 2 million functionally illiterate, and there are 3 million marginally illiterate. These people belong to the other nation, the illiterates who are not free. That's a challenge for you and for me.

I think the other things that those of us who have made it need to tell Hispanics is that they can make it too. Many of the *chiquillos* are hearing from others *tu no sirves para nada*; you're good for nothing. I'm constantly telling people that we've overdone it in putting down kids. I am convinced that a compliment goes a whole lot further than a hundred reprimands. So we need to help children to believe in themselves. I think the best thing that we can tell kids, is, "You can make it, because I made it. And I made it not because I'm exceptional, I made it not because I'm unique, I made it just simply because I'm one like you. I was given an opportunity, and I was given support. And we're willing to give you an opportunity; we're willing to give you support. You can make it too.

I think we also need to work on changing the low self-image. So often when I address groups of Mexican Americans, I say, "Have you ever thought about being a doctor, a nurse, a lawyer, a priest, a bishop, maybe even being a pope?" And I'm heartbroken when they say, "No, porque somos Mexicanos. ¿A qué podremos llegar? No, because we're Mexicans, and could we ever arrive at anything? And I say, "I'm a Mexican American, and I think I've come a long way, baby. So you can too, sure." But the attitude somehow is synonymous—because you are Mexican American, you are a nothing. We have to constantly do a little bit of brainwashing to wash away the idea that you're nothing if you're of Hispanic descent. We really have to help people to believe in themselves.

Finally—and I'm glad to hear that this is happening already in some of your districts—working with families. Working with families, and convincing them that the best inheritance they can give their children is not money, it's not a house, it's not a little *tierrita* when they die. The best inheritance they can give them is an education. Whatever you can do to convince parents to support their children, I think it will get you further than anything else.

About five years ago, I got two invitations on the same day. One of them was very tempting. I was invited to be the speaker at a university in Denver. They said that if I accepted the invitation I would also be given an honorary doctoral degree. Well, I found

that a little bit tempting; I don't have a doctoral degree. The other invitation was to an elementary school; it was report card day, the last day of the year. The principal was telling me in her letter that they were really trying to get parental support. And they thought that I would be a drawing card if they could say in their invitation, "Archbishop Flores is coming; please come for report card day." I was to be the speaker. I hesitated wondering what would be the best, not only for me, but for them. I said well no, I don't need a doctoral degree; my salary is going to be the same. And those who are graduating don't need my help now. Maybe those in elementary school do, and I chose to go to that elementary school. When I got there, they told me to hide behind the stage, and I would come only when I would be invited. The first thing on the program was that the fourth graders were going to be doing a little dance, La Raspa. The couples did okay, but all of a sudden, one little kid stopped, and he started crying. I concluded that he had gotten stage fright, because I had had those experiences in my early days of singing and dancing. So as the kids were coming down, I told them how great they were, but I made sure that I spoke with the little kid who had cried and stopped dancing. I said, "I know what happened to you. You got stage fright. But that's okay, everybody gets that every so often, but you were doing okay. And the little kid looked at me and he said, "I was not scared, I was angry." I said, "At what?" He said, "At my mother and my father, because I begged them to come tonight, and I looked out to where they were supposed to be, and they ain't there. I'm angry at them." Then he said, "Do you know where they're at? They're at the cantina. They go to the cantina Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, but they won't come to nothing for me in school." Then soon they were asking me to go out on stage. I was holding the kid's hand, and I said, "will you come with me, I need you." And he didn't know what for, but he followed, and I took a chair, and I put it in front of the microphone. And I decided to change my speech. I said, "Did you notice this little kid a few minutes ago? That he was dancing, and then he stopped dancing. The little girl was pulling him, trying to get him to dance, and she couldn't." I said, "I bet you thought what I did, that he wouldn't go on because of stage fright." Parents started nodding their heads, and I said, "Well, you're wrong; I was wrong, too. He has just told me that he cried because his parents did not come to support him." I said, "Now, are the parents of this kid out there?" (There was a big crowd in

the auditorium.) I said, "If you're out there, please say so. There's still time to heal a wound. Are you out there?" But they didn't answer. And I said, "If the neighbors of this kid are out there, tell his parents that I said, 'Shame on you, because you could have done the greatest thing for your child.'" They could have done the greatest thing for their child, but they didn't. If tomorrow this kid becomes a delinquent or a criminal, he's not to be blamed. But the parents who don't give him the support are to be blamed.

Then afterward, the child told me, "Well, Father, part of the problem is that the man ain't my father; he my third step-father. And he really doesn't care; he really doesn't love me." And I have to tell you I hugged the kid, and I cried, and I said, "I do; that's why I came here. Today, I could have been in Denver, but I chose to be here because I love you and I want you to keep on studying. I want you to not give up." But I knew I was asking him to do the impossible, because how can you not give up when you're not supported, and when you're not supported right in the home. The homes, however, offer the youth of the community the greatest inheritance possible: an appreciation for work and an appreciation for education.

Keep up your work, and God bless you.

# Cooperative Efforts: Business, Education, and Community

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## Sam Ogletree

My presentation to you today will address three major issues and concerns. The first part is related to the videotape developed by Southwestern Bell Telephone Company with the assistance of many Hispanic organizations. The second part deals with the implications for partnerships between business and education. The third part deals with ourselves, as business and educational leaders, and how we can work toward improving the quality of life for all people.

I don't know who all in this area or in this room has seen *Hispanic Dropouts: America's Time Bomb*, the video that Southwestern Bell put out. I would like you to know that the idea originated on this campus, emanating from the remarks Dr. Cavazos made more than two years ago. I was sitting in Dr. Cavazos' office when he said, "You know, you're a public corporation; you have a responsibility to all of society to help with a very serious problem." I knew that he had been to the White House two or three times on this Hispanic dropout situation, so he caught my attention. In 10 minutes, one-on-one, he gave me that full-impact speech that he gave you this morning in 30 minutes, I mean I really felt it. He said, "Why don't you at Southwestern Bell, go out and take out a full-page ad in the newspaper, and address these serious issues that we have in the Hispanic dropout situation? Why don't you relate this to the parents, to the students, to the teachers, to the corporate community as to what kind of problem we really have." I thought, "My goodness, this man doesn't understand public utility economics. Where would I get that kind of money to take out a full-page ad and address it to a public issue, a social issue?" Well, it just so happened that when I was driving down the street, talking to myself, I thought that it would be great if we

could help try to make a difference in a situation that he is so dedicated to. I took this idea back to my Hispanic stakeholders group in Southwestern Bell. And, a year and a half later, we have the video. Most of my remarks today are about that video, and for those of you who have not seen it, or would like to get a copy of it, I would like to see you later on. I don't know just exactly what I can do to help you, but I bet I'll try.

More than 200,000 families in 11 cities across Texas have seen the documentary since its release last fall. In Houston and El Paso, the program aired in prime time. In other cities, it was shown in prime time access. Here in Lubbock, it showed on a Sunday afternoon prior to the Cowboy football game, so we had plenty of viewing public for it. The Spanish International Network, or SIN, soon will broadcast a Spanish version. We're completing that at this moment and should have it available in the very near future. Also, 12 affiliate stations in such cities as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Miami, Phoenix and others will carry this Spanish version as well as some 339 cable systems throughout the nation. Thousands of others have viewed the documentary in schools and at meetings of Hispanic and educational organizations. We have tried our best, and with much success, to get this into the churches for their viewing and for their parishioners' viewing. More than 130 copies of the program have been distributed throughout the United States, and more calls come in every day. During the documentary's final editing, groups such as the National Council of La Raza and Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education provided valuable input. Of course, the documentary simply wouldn't have been possible without the help and support of LULAC [League of United Latin-American Citizens].

We produced the program to increase awareness of how the dropout problem threatens everyone. But we also want to make people aware that it's a problem that can be solved. If you have seen the videotape, you know that there are some solutions. James Vasquez, who many of you know, is the superintendent of the Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio. The Edgewood district is the fifth poorest in the state. It's 98 percent Hispanic. Yet the dropout rate in his district is only 10-15 percent compared to 45-50 percent for Hispanics statewide. So there *are* answers to the dropout dilemma. We have to look for those answers—educators, business leaders, parents, all of us—



because the dropout problem affects all of us and weakens the fabric of our very society.

The documentary and conferences like this one are a start, perhaps a beginning to the end of the tragic waste of human lives. If you have not seen the documentary, I encourage you to see it soon.

One attempt to study why kids drop out occurred at the University of Miami. Twenty athletes from its nationally ranked football team were trained to interview 180 students from inner-city high schools in Miami. Those football players also served as role models for the youngsters. The study discovered that the main difference between the 100 students who stayed in school and the 80 who dropped out was the emotional support that the students received. The kids who stayed in school had strong emotional bonds with friends and at least one family member. Those students felt that someone really cared about what happened to them. The kids who dropped out lacked that support, and early in life many of them had been labeled "poor students" or unable to "fit in." Many felt, for whatever reason, that their parents didn't care about whether they stayed in school or not. Certainly their friends, many of them dropouts themselves, didn't care whether they quit or stayed in school. For these kids, school is often a hostile environment where they feel alienated, and where they perceive themselves as chronic failures. The point is this: success breeds success; failure breeds failure. As Mayor Henry Cisneros says so eloquently in the documentary, "It's vitally important that children feel that someone supports their effort, whether that someone is a parent, a school counselor, or maybe a family friend. To stay in school, to be successful, these children must first believe that they can succeed despite family, emotional, or financial problems."

Role models are a tremendous resource in helping kids realize that others like them have made it, and they can make it, too. Children can study their role models, how they became successful, in order to pattern their own lives and dreams. As Dr. Hope Garcia says in the documentary, "Hispanic role models are available in all fields: medicine, law, accounting, education, business, and sports."

Of course, kids quit school for many reasons. Family and money problems, emotional difficulties, drug abuse, pregnancies, and repeated academic failures, are a few of the reasons. The pat answers and standard solutions just won't work. They never

really have. These kids need real understanding and individualized attention. That's why I'm so excited about a program that my company, Southwestern Bell, is involved in, called Communities in Schools, or CIS (and you heard about it earlier this morning). CIS gets everyone in a community involved: business leaders, educators, social service agency employees, parents, and the like. The program brings all these people and the resources of the organizations together to focus on the problems of high-risk students. The program coordinates efforts so those kids can be targeted for special one-on-one counseling and guidance.

Here's one example of how the program works. In Dallas, a ninth-grade boy confided to his school counselor that he had only two old shirts and two pairs of trousers, which were worn out, to wear for the entire school year. The boy's father had abandoned the family and left his mother with a stack of unpaid bills and very, very little money. Electricity, gas, and water were just about to be shut off. The school counselor turned to CIS for help. She feared the boy would leave school because of his family's financial problems and the mother's inability to solve those problems because she spoke only Spanish. CIS staffers helped by calling the utility companies and arranging a payment plan for the mother. CIS coordinated food and clothing to see that the family got through their crisis. And the youngster remained in school. The boy said this to one of the CIS staffers later on: "I don't know what we would have done if it hadn't been for the fact that you were there to work with us." And that's just one example of how CIS is working, focusing on and solving the individual problems that result in students dropping out of school.

The program is coordinated statewide, but CIS works because it's run locally. It's run in the communities where the program operates. During the 1985-86 school year, CIS helped more than 3,000 kids statewide. From its start in Houston in 1979, it has expanded to Dallas, El Paso, Austin, San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Harlingen, Fort Worth, and is planning to move to other cities. Even more impressive, of the 500 students enrolled in the summer youth employment program in Houston in 1984, 87 percent continued in school or have gone on to college, additional training, or unsubsidized jobs. Of the students with criminal records, 78 percent did not reenter the criminal justice system. CIS works, and Southwestern Bell is proud to be part of the State Advisory Council for CIS.

Southwestern Bell Telephone Company has been involved with CIS almost from the start, and we believe in it and support it. Sometimes people in the private sector ask me why a corporation like Southwestern Bell would care about CIS and the whole dropout issue. Frankly, it's more than simply recognizing that we should get involved. Of course, it's satisfying to use our resources to help others. But, as we also know, we must get involved to ensure Southwestern Bell's future success. It's more than philanthropy. As you heard this morning, it's enlightened self-interest. Ours is a high-tech business; we require a skilled, educated, and adaptable work force, one that reflects the diversity of our Texas population. To do our job, topnotch employees are essential. For those who want a career with Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, the options are limited without a good education, and it's the same in any other business. Smokestack industries are disappearing, and high-tech industries are taking their place. But the skilled workers that those new industries need simply are not available.

A study by the Ford Foundation illustrates just how much of a handicap the lack of a high school diploma can be. Only 18 percent of the jobs are open to those who do not graduate from high school. For those dropouts who do happen to find a job, however, the study showed that they are usually the last people hired, and the first to be fired with the economy goes bad.

The bottom line for business is this: in order to remain competitive, corporations like ours must help find solutions to the dropout dilemma. That's why Southwestern Bell is involved in fighting the dropout problem. And that's why cooperative ventures between the private and public sectors, like Communities in Schools, are cropping up all over the United States.

It's interesting to me that many states are beginning to emphasize issues like education, the dropout rate, and teenage pregnancy, and drug use. It was only a couple years ago that Bruce Babbitt of Arizona, the former governor who is now running for president in 1988, was ridiculed in newspaper articles for devoting his entire state-of-the-state message to these very topics. One year later, the same critics were praising him for his reforms.

Of course, programs like those we've talked about, about how to help keep kids in school, are costly. There's no question at all about that. But we should look at these programs as an investment instead of an expense. As someone once said,

investing in young children is like compound interest; the benefits in reduced costs to society accrue year after year. As Jimmy Vasquez said in the documentary, "We can pay now, or we can pay later."

I think our choice is simple. It's much easier to build successful children than to repair men and women. Sure, these programs cost money, a lot of money sometimes; but crime itself costs more, welfare costs more, and drug abuse costs more. Eighty-five percent of the 30,000 prison inmates in Texas are dropouts. They cost the state \$892 million a year. Think what the state could do with \$892 million a year now, with times that we're facing like this! It costs the taxpayers \$35,000 a year to feed, clothe, and house each one of the inmates. Compare that to the \$3,700 it costs to educate a child, and then tell me that these programs are too expensive. The Texas Commissioner of Education, William Kirby, said it best: "If you don't have an education, it's hard to earn a living. And if you can't earn a living, you have to steal one."

For those of us in business, I say we must do more. More than simply give our money. We have to give our time, we have to really get involved, to be committed with a hands-on approach. It's easier just to write a check or to make an excuse. Real commitment takes energy, time, and involvement. That's what makes life meaningful: helping others, lending a hand, making a difference when and where you can.

Government by itself simply isn't capable of solving all the social problems that we face in the future; corporations must step in to fill that void. What can we do? Plenty. We can provide summer jobs for youngsters. We can donate much-needed equipment for the youngsters. We can produce promotional material. We can loan executives and other management resources. We are limited in what we can do only by our imagination.

Someone once said that the tragedy is not the number of dropouts; the real tragedy is that we're not doing enough about it. We've made a start, but it would be tragic to stop here. The public is just beginning to recognize how destructive the dropout problem is to all of us. Our dropout rate in Texas is higher than all but eight states and the District of Columbia. Last spring 80,000 Texas students failed to earn their high school diploma. We simply *must* find a way to end this waste of human potential.

Now I would like to focus my remarks on the dilemma that business faces with an undereducated pool of employees. America's education problem is also a problem for America's businesses. To compete in today's global marketplace, industry desperately needs employees with quality educations. Without a skilled, adaptable work force, a business cannot work efficiently or productively. According to recent predictions, the situation is expected to worsen, not improve. For those without basic academic skills, jobs are becoming increasingly scarce. With the decline of semi-skilled jobs, the basic skills needed even for entry-level positions have become more complicated. And skill deficiencies limit workers' productivity. The growing mismatch between job types and the work force is leading to a drop in productivity, an unemployable underclass, and a sharp rise in crime.

High-tech is altering tremendously the way jobs are performed, and by 1990, an estimated three of every four jobs will require some education beyond high school—and certainly technical training beyond high school. American corporations clearly value education and training. In 1986, companies with 50 or more employees spent roughly \$30 billion on formal training and \$180 billion on informal training. Total corporate expenditures for training almost equaled the expenditures on primary, secondary, and higher education all combined.

Many corporations are finding their employees don't even have the basic skills needed to build upon, and hence, must offer their own courses in order to have adequately prepared high school graduates. Corporate leaders in many areas of the country are worried about high dropout rates. They know that better prepared students are more employable. They know and want well-trained employees who will stay on the job. Leaders in business, education, and politics, as well as parents have indicated their concerns about high dropout rates and have moved in the direction of developing and forming partnerships between the schools and other major institutions in our society.

The question is, How can partnerships help? Educators have traditionally resisted the idea of interference from the business world. However, some have begun to put aside such objections in the hope of gaining much-needed attention. Businesses have also realized that they must identify their needs and communicate their priorities to educators—that is, if they want their future human resource needs fulfilled. Both groups realize that it is

incumbent on them to adequately determine the present and future educational needs of the total community.

How can partnerships take form? Partnerships can take form by the creation of autonomous, action-oriented councils that include representatives from a broad spectrum of groups including government, business, labor, community groups and schools, all acting as equal partners trying to identify educational issues related to improving education, particularly as it relates to the transition to work. Corporate-sponsored foundations can be created to fund specific local school improvement programs in an effort to replace lost federal and state dollars. Trust must be present if these programs are to survive. Schools must not abuse the corporate money as some districts did with many of the federal dollars they previously received.

Are partnerships the answer? The answer is yes and no, but mostly yes. That means that partnerships between business and education can help solve some of the problems but not all of them. Schools, communities, parents, and business must all become involved in problem-solving approaches if we're to turn the tide in our favor.

One more note that I wish to make today concerns national and international transformations. Too many educators, corporate leaders, and government representatives are operating upon old pictures of the cosmos and human nature, including the nature of work, the worker, and the management process itself. Leaders in all institutions, be they educational, business, or others need to join the common struggle for a world cultural rebirth, and assist in conjuring up new visions that will energize or motivate the human family. Psychiatrist Robert Lifton put the matter succinctly when he said, "In times of severe historical dislocation, social institutions and symbols, whether having to do with worship, work, learning, punishment, or pleasures, lose their power and psychological legitimacy. We still live by them, but they no longer live in us. Or, rather, we live in a half-life with one another."

Dr. Lifton reminds us that the essence of human growth occurs when old routines break down and are replaced by larger spheres of change. Communal resymbolization then occurs in all aspects of human existence. Leaders can help formulate more relevant, life-enhancing imagery for the culture. Just as the individual goes through passages in the life process and is challenged to renewal by transitional experiences, so too are our collective selves. It is a



continuing search for meaning that causes the phenomenon, a passing over and coming back to one's own culture with new insights and lifestyles. Whereas, in the past, such transformation was caused by great innovators, today many people partake in the resymbolization task. I believe that today's leaders, because of their opportunity to gain new knowledge and experiences, are in an unusual position to join in the process of renewal, and thus can offer an opportunity to all for the re-creation of cultural assumptions normal in practices on a planetary scale.

The importance of cross-cultural understanding, especially for those engaged in education, management, and technology transfer is most evident in the arena of business communications, education, and travel. Consider for a moment the issue of cross-border data flow for a typical company today, and how that management information can be distorted when there are intercultural misunderstandings, whether with minority or foreign personnel. Cross-culturally skilled leaders in business and education are essential for the effective management of emerging global corporations and emerging transnational educational schemes.

Our state, our nation, and the world at large face numerous economic and social challenges in the years ahead. If we're to take those challenges head on, we must be able to call on the resources of all of our citizens to help, from all segments of society. We can—we must—find solutions to the dropout problem. Texas culture, our future, and our children's future depend on it.



# Hispanic Participation in Adult Education and GED Testing Programs

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**Catherine E. Erwin\***

According to the 1980 United States Census, approximately 3,000,000 people of Hispanic origin live in Texas (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). This represents 21 percent of the Texas population. Projections of the Hispanic population for the state show this number increasing by more than 30 percent by 1990. Currently in Texas, there are about 4,000,000 adults, 19 years old or older, who do not have a high school education. More than 1,000,000 of these people are of Hispanic origin, most often from Mexico. Observations of Texas educators indicate that most of these 4,000,000 adults are probably unaware of the availability of adult education programs throughout the state, and many educators believe that this need for information applies especially to the Hispanic population. According to the Texas Education Agency, last year, 181,982 adults participated in adult education programs. About 49.2 percent of the participants were of Hispanic origin.

To increase the overall public awareness of General Education Development (GED) testing programs throughout Texas, especially in those counties with large Hispanic populations, the American Council on Education and the Texas Education Agency conducted a cooperative research project. The project's primary goal was to gather information essential to the development of future adult education programs and for meeting the needs of future GED candidates in Texas.

\*Michael B. Wallace and Andrew G. Malizio coauthored the study on which this report was based. The research was supported by a grant from the Meadows Foundation, but the views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Meadows Foundation.

## METHODOLOGY

With the assistance of the Texas Education Agency, the GED Testing Service developed a survey form for GED candidates and one for adult education students. To encourage people of Hispanic origin to participate in the project, the forms were available in English and in Spanish. The survey asked for demographic information on racial background, age, sex, number of adults and children living with them; highest grade completed, grades earned in school, information on high school interpersonal relationships with peers and school officials, and reasons for leaving school; current employment status, occupation, and employment plans; how and when they first learned about the GED Testing or adult education programs, reasons for taking the GED, and expectations of outcome subsequent to earning their high school credential; extent of reading, television watching, and radio listening activity; preparation activities prior to taking the GED tests, and how the programs could be administered differently to facilitate easier participation relating to scheduling provisions, child care, and transportation. Several open-ended questions asked for suggestions on improving services for candidates and adults, suggestions for getting more people to participate in the programs, and identification of what aspects of the program they found least or most enjoyable.

More than 200 GED examiners, adult education directors, teachers, instructors, and aides assisted in data collection by administering the survey forms to all GED candidates and adult education students immediately following GED testing or while the adult education students were attending class, between June 1, 1985, and November 30, 1985. Most respondents completed the survey in approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Approximately 11,000 survey forms (for 5,799 adult education students and 5,082 GED candidates) were received by the American Council on Education. Results are summarized separately for GED candidates and adult education students. The data were further analyzed along ethnic categories to allow Hispanic/non-Hispanic comparisons. The results presented herein include selected variables.

## RESULTS

### GED Candidates

#### *Demographic Information*

*Race/Hispanic origin.* Approximately 51 percent of the GED candidates were white, 13 percent black, and 30 percent Hispanic.

*Number of children living in the household.* Approximately 42 percent of the white respondents, 26 percent of the black respondents, and 19 percent of the Hispanic respondents indicated that they have no children living in their household. Twenty-eight percent of whites, 25 percent of blacks, and 25 percent of Hispanics reported having one child in the household. About 19 percent of whites, 23 percent of blacks, and 26 percent of Hispanics reported having two children in their household. Nearly 11 percent of whites, 22 percent of blacks, and 24 percent of Hispanics responding reported having three or four children in their household. About 1 percent of white, 3 percent of black, and 6 percent of Hispanic respondents report having five or more children in their household.

#### *Employment*

Approximately 63 percent of white, 47 percent of black, and 53 percent of Hispanic respondents report being employed either full time or part time. The most frequently cited occupations among GED candidates are handlers, helpers, and laborers (construction, freight, sanitation), 14 percent; sales, 13 percent; and service (including cooks, custodians, and waiters/waitresses), 11 percent. Nearly 36 percent of white respondents, and 47 percent of Hispanic respondents indicated that they plan to get a job after attaining their high school credential.

#### *Source of First Information about the GED Program*

Approximately 52 percent of the GED candidates reported knowing about the GED Testing Program before they left school. Another 18 percent learned about the program within one year of leaving school and nearly 16 percent first learned about the program six or more years after leaving school. Most candidates reported that they first learned about the GED Testing Program from friends and neighbors or relatives. Across all age groups, the percentage of candidates learning from friends varied from 43 to 47 percent. The percentages of candidates who first learned about

the GED from relatives, television, radio, or print media were roughly equal. One of every two Hispanics first learned of the program from a friend. By comparison, 37 of 100 black candidates and 31 of 100 white candidates found out from a friend. A school or educational agency first informed about 16 percent of whites, 10 percent of blacks, and 8 percent of Hispanics. Counselors were the first source of information for about 6 percent of whites, 7 percent of blacks, and 2 percent of Hispanics. Overall, approximately 19 percent first learned about the GED Testing Program through schools or educational agencies. Television and radio (combined) accounted for about 1 percent of the ways that candidates first learned about the program.

### ***Reading and Media Habits***

Seventy-five percent of all GED candidates reported that they read on a regular basis. Approximately 43-percent of those responding indicated that they read at least 1 to 5 hours per week and nearly one of every four candidates reported that they read between 6 and 16 hours per week. Nearly 30 percent reported reading journals most often and 7 percent read manuals. About 42 percent read magazines. Almost three of every four candidates read the newspaper on a regular basis. The most frequently read section of the newspaper is the local news section, with 66 percent of the candidates indicating that section. More than half read the national news, 40 percent read the classified section, and 36 percent read the entertainment/TV section. The sports and comic sections were read by approximately 30 percent of those taking the GED tests, with the editorial section being the least frequently read section of the newspaper.

### ***Television Viewing***

Approximately 16 percent of the GED candidates in Texas reported that they do not watch television regularly; 31 percent watch 1 to 5 hours per week; 25 percent reported watching 6-10 hours per week. Slightly more than 8 percent watch more than 20 hours per week.

### ***Radio Listening***

Approximately 14 percent of the candidates reported that they do not listen to the radio regularly. Nearly 31 percent listen

between 1 to 5 hours per week and about one in five persons taking the GED tests in Texas reported listening to the radio more than 20 hours per week. About one-third of the people responding reported that they usually listen to rock-and-roll radio stations, approximately 30 percent listen to popular music stations, and 19 percent listen to country/western programming. Less than 5 percent of the GED candidates reported listening to radio stations that broadcast in Spanish.

### ***Suggestions for Improvement of Services by GED Candidates***

Of a subsample of 993 questionnaires, nearly 22 percent suggested ways to get more people involved in GED testing. About 76 percent of those indicated a need for more publicity in accomplishing greater participation in the program. Television and radio were the most frequently cited means of publicizing the program, with 57 percent and 53 percent of all GED respondents indicating them, respectively.

### **Adult Education Students**

#### ***Demographic Information***

*Race/Hispanic origin.* Approximately 9 percent of the adult education students were white, 14 percent black, and 65 percent Hispanic.

*Number of children in the household.* Approximately 26 percent of all adult education students reported having no children in the household. About 22 percent reported having one child at home; 23 percent reported two children in the household; about 15 percent reported having three children in the household; nearly 8 percent reported four children in the household; approximately 7 percent reported having five or more children at home.

#### ***Employment***

Approximately 42 percent of all adult education students responding reported being employed. About 8 percent were unemployed and not seeking employment, while nearly 27 percent were unemployed and seeking employment. The most frequently cited occupations of adult education students are handlers, helpers, and laborers (construction, freight, sanitation) 20 percent; service (domestics, cooks, custodians, waiters) 10

percent; and sales (retail, wholesale) 8 percent. About 9 percent reported that they have never been employed. Approximately 36 percent planned "to get a job," while 22 percent planned "to change employers." About 10 percent planned to stay with their current employer, and nearly 20 percent planned to seek a better job with the same employer.

### *Source of First Information about the Adult Education Program*

Approximately 22 percent of the adult education students reported that they knew about the adult education program before leaving school. Another 11 percent reported learning about the program within one year of leaving school, while 25 percent reported having first learned of the program six or more years after leaving school. Most adult education students reported having first learned of the program from friends (47 percent) and relatives (19 percent). About 10 percent first learned of the program through school or educational agencies. Counselors were the first to inform nearly 3 percent of the adult education students. Television and radio combined first informed about 44 percent of these students.

In response to a related item, 6 percent of adult education students reported having a parent or parents enrolled in the adult education program, about 17 percent reported having siblings enrolled in the program, and nearly 12 percent reported having other relatives involved in adult education.

### *Reading and Media Habits*

Eighty-two percent of adult education students reported that they read on a regular basis. Forty-six percent indicated that they regularly read at least 1-5 hours per week, and approximately 29 percent reported reading between 6 and 16 hours per week. About 7 percent reported that they read 17 or more hours per week. About 22 percent reported reading books most often, whereas 30 percent read journals, and 8 percent read manuals. Approximately 38 percent indicated that they most often read magazines. Fifty-four percent of the adult education student respondents reported that they regularly read the newspaper. The most frequently read section of the newspaper, as reported by this group, was the local news section (56 percent). Fifty-three percent reported reading the classified section, and about 37 percent read the entertainment/TV section. The sports section was read by

nearly 31 percent of the adult education students, with the comics and editorial sections least frequently read.

**Television Viewing.** Approximately 17 percent of the adult education students reported that they do not watch television regularly. About 35 percent reported watching 1-5 hours per week, 22 percent reported that they watched about 6-10 hours per week, and nearly 15 percent reported watching 17 or more hours of television programming weekly.

**Radio Listening.** Approximately 19 percent of the adult education students responding reported that they do not listen to radio programming regularly. About 38 percent listen 1-5 hours per week; about 18 percent listen 6-10 hours per week. Slightly more than 17 percent indicated that they listen to the radio at least 17 hours per week. Approximately 28 percent of the students responding, who listen to the radio regularly, selected a "popular" music station most often. Nearly 20 percent indicated that they select an "easy listening" radio station and about 16 percent selected a "rock-and-roll" station. "Country/western" and "jazz" were the least frequently selected types of stations. Approximately 25 percent of these students reported that they select a radio station that broadcasts in Spanish. (This percentage compares with 5 percent of the GED candidates who make this selection.)

### ***Suggestions for Improving Adult Education Services***

Of a subsample of 115 respondents who made suggestions, approximately 52 percent suggested that more flexible scheduling would improve services. These respondents recommended day and evening classes and longer class periods. Improved instruction/instructional materials was cited by about 47 percent of the respondents as an aspect of the program needing improvement.

### ***Suggestions for Increasing Adult Education Program Participation***

About 71 percent of a subsample of 203 adult education students who provided suggestions for increasing participation in adult education programs, indicated a need for more publicity. Additionally, in open-ended responses, the adult education students said that the content of public announcements on the programs should include information to allay fears of embarrassment that many adult education students may feel in returning to



**Table 1**

***Suggestions for Improvement of Services by Adult Education Students (N = 115)***

Suggestions for improving services	N	%
More flexible scheduling	60	52.2
Improved instruction/instructional materials	54	46.9
Improved counseling services	25	21.7
Class facilities/equipment	23	20.0
Location of learning center	22	19.1
Transportation	17	14.8
Child care	13	11.3

an educational setting. Personal endorsement of the program to friends and relatives was perceived as important in increasing adult education program participation, as well.

### IMPLICATIONS

Most GED candidates find out about the GED programs before leaving school. School personnel (counselors, teachers, principals) should inform all students who are about to leave school of GED testing programs. Depending on available resources, maintenance of a file of students who recently left school can be used to conduct direct mail campaigns, and as a means of notifying more individuals of program availability. Increasing the number of carefully designed television and radio announcements concerning specific information about GED and adult education programs on as many television networks as possible and on a wide variety of radio stations, seems to be a strategy for reaching the largest number of people. These announcements should include specific information on the GED program, such as schedules, center locations, fees, and the like. Announcements of adult education programs should be designed so as to be sensitive to the embarrassment sometimes experienced by adult students when they return to an academic environment. Poster campaigns should be initiated in the workplace, particularly in service and sales occupational areas. More flexible scheduling of classes should be implemented by both programs, providing day and evening classes. Weekend classes might also be considered.

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# Reports from Work Sessions/Interest Groups

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**Richard Molina—Lubbock, Texas**

I want to say that it's really exciting to see all the different areas of interest coming together to brainstorm some of these exciting ideas. I'm really motivated, being a member of the Lubbock ISD Dropout Task Force, and I think I'm beginning to see what it means to, as Dr. Cavazos mentioned, raise the level of consciousness. I think we're beginning to see it, of course, with the schools and then in the community, and then in industry. And in bringing this together, I think I see great promise.

One of the areas that we discussed in there [Dr. Leslie's group] was: being aware of more emphasis on early childhood programs, going back to the pre-kindergarten years and working with those parents and staying with those parents and those children as they progress upwards. We discussed the concern, the dichotomy, we have at this time. As mentioned earlier, we talked about public policy. There seems to be a public policy or attitude that we must reduce funds, and yet we're saying we must reduce the dropout rate. That, we felt, was a situation that must be addressed. We must make up our minds what do we want to do: decrease the dropout rate and make a conscious effort to finance the programs that we really need, or reduce funds.

Another interesting area that we talked about involves the armed forces. A program in particular was the Naval Junior ROTC, where retired military personnel come into the schools and work with at-risk kids. They don't talk just military; they talk to the kids on a one-to-one basis, emphasizing motivation and setting up expectations and goals. This can be done on an after-school basis.

Another possibility was bringing in relevance to the content for kids and making school fun and interesting. In this area in elementary schools here in the Lubbock Independent School District, we have what we call the "Odyssey of the Mind" where the elementary kids get together and experience fun things. They

discover that they *can do*. In academic decathlons, all levels of academic experiences are rewarded or identified. What this does is three things: it relates content to content, it relates content to the student experience, and it relates content to society as far as the student is concerned.

Another area that we talked about was the teacher experience, or how teachers are compatible with the students. And we discussed programs like 4-MAT, a program that allows the teacher to realize how she or he learns, and this relates to how she teaches. At the same time it gives the teacher an awareness that there are four quadrants the teacher can teach to, thus addressing the four different types of kids the teacher might have, as identified by the 4-MAT program.

Another program that I have personally experienced (and I think it's very rewarding) and one the L.I.S.D. is currently allowing all of the administrators to go through, is the Bi-Polar program, which identifies strengths and tendencies in one's own personality. It creates a different awareness and appreciation of the differences in personality as you deal with children and adults.

Another concern raised by our group was counseling, the counselor, and the amount of paperwork that counselors have to do. We know that the different federal mandates and different programs the state has all take the counselors away from their job of one-on-one counseling. There was concern that the kids on the verge of dropping out like to have that contact with someone who cares. Our group mentioned that one way to address this would be to require counselors to document that they are spending at least 50 percent of their time on one-to-one counseling. Maybe this is what school districts should strive for. We know that paperwork like scheduling can be an important opportunity for counselors to talk to kids.

Another area that we discussed was the extended school year. In grades kindergarten through eight, where kids are identified as being two grades below reading level, they are required to go to summer school—with the parents' consent. In summer school, they strive to bring that kid up to grade level in reading. The summer school program, of course, is free and, at the same time, kids are given an activity calendar to take home to their family and to use. Each day that's on this calendar is brought forth, and parents ask, "Have you done this activity?" It serves to enrich or enhance the parent-student-school relationship.

Our group had two final items. A question was raised: How do we evaluate curriculum? Some of the ways that this was addressed included students' scores (of course that not being the only criterion), through teacher evaluations, practical observations, and also a follow-up of graduates to evaluate school experiences. In other words, when the kid exits high school, let's say in three years, there's a questionnaire sent out, and it asks, "What was the best of your school experiences? What were some of the areas where improvement was needed?"

And finally, we mentioned some motivational-type counseling for students who might be discipline problems and who are at risk. I believe the term *intervention specialist* was mentioned, but I believe that is another group's topic and we should let them discuss it.

### Linda DeLeon—Lubbock, Texas

I went to the Operation Intervention that's being done in Corpus Christi, and it was really thrilling to see some of the things they've done. Within a year's time, the dropout rate has dropped 30 percent. One of the things they're doing involves *intervention specialists*. They have a [central office] coordinator over the whole thing, but at each of the five high schools, they have an intervention specialist, and then they also have a team of teachers who are intervention teachers. High risk students they identify are directed to the specialist, who is a counselor. He or she works with the student to try to deal with some of the problems they're having. They are also channeled, maybe, into this particular team of teachers, where the teachers are the type who will go an extra step to help these students with the problems they are having.

Some of the things that they identify include: if the student fails three courses within a six-week period, that student is at risk, a dropout risk. They also have out-of-school youth campuses. The students go to work during the day, and then in the evening they go to school. They receive the same credits as they would during the day, and then they graduate at the end of the year. We thought that that was a very big plus there. They go four times a week.

They also have a peer tutoring program. Students are paid minimum wage to tutor the students who are at risk, and who are having problems. They're tutored in the mornings or in the

afternoons, whichever time is easier for that student to be at the school with his peer.

They also have a vocational program, a summer school vocational program where they receive two full credits for CVAE, the same as taking four classes; they do that during the summer for students. I thought it was very impressive that within a year's time (this was just started this year, 1986-87), they have seen a 30 percent reduction in dropouts—I thought it was excellent.

### Richard Rudder—Odessa, Texas

I find it disappointing, I dare say "shocking," that only few people attended my group, because I thought one of the reasons we were here was to share something that really works with dropouts, especially with our Hispanic youth. We have such a program in Odessa. It is not part of the Ector County school system. It is funded totally by Title II-A youth programs of the JTPA. This has become a permanent project, a project that now serves 80 dropout youth a day, 72 percent of whom are Hispanic.

This project started out, I guess, possibly as a way the JTPA was going to meet their performance criteria or goals, but it became something greater than that. It became something that really became a very human story. The stories that I've heard today (that we all have heard) were really exciting to me because I *live* these stories out every day. Porfirio Carillo came to my office the other day on referral from his school principal. He's in the ninth grade, 142 IQ, one of nine children, and his dad says, "I can't work; you go out and work, get out of school." That boy comes to me and I said, "Porfirio, let's get your dad and mom in here, too. We're gonna talk." They didn't want to come. Why? They don't speak English. "I speak Spanish, get them in here. Let's talk." You know what that boy's doing today? He's doing 12.9 reading level, calculus, and science in our individualized, highly structured, self-paced open-entry, open-exit program.

There were 18 of these last December in Texas, called Comprehensive Competency Programs (CCP). Now, as of this month, there are 24, including that of Midland Independent School District, which just started their new alternative school at the mall today. (And I had the pleasure of working with those very good people down there, and I'm excited about seeing what comes to that project.)

Part of the thing about the CCP program is that you have this learning technology that is really not new. It is a technology that states that we need individualized attention for these at-risk youth, be they gifted, underachievers, or whatever. Self-paced, open-entry, open-exit, as I said. Well, as educators we say, what's new about individualized? We've talked about it since I was a little child, but I have never really seen it [individualized instruction] implemented in this particular technology. I'm not saying that I am a proponent of this one technology over another. There are others in the country, but only two have been named by the President as exemplary model programs dealing with incredible, long-lasting, grade gains with these students.

We have a nonschool environment in the alternative program. I have my own building; I'm behind Odessa High. I have a good working agreement with the high school. I have some kids who have learning disabilities, I have tested and documented that, and one hour a day, they go over to the high school, to the LD class where they receive very professional and tender care, and then they come back for two hours in my program. The kids are there three hours of the day, nine to twelve or one to four with a 15-minute break. It's structured and intensive. We emphasize time on task, and we document it by consistent mastery of competencies—not time-based learning, but competency-based learning. And that gets us into the current controversy: Why can't a school district then, such as our magnificent Lubbock school district here, why can't they refer people to these competency-based programs? Because many administrators are reluctant to do this because they fear that they're not going to recap the ADA funds. Well, you've lost these students already. Let's bring them back into an alternative setting—and Dr. Kirby— and I'm unhappy that he's not here today, because he would have assured us that as far as his interpretations of the statutes are, school districts that, through alternative means—true, viable alternatives—recover students—these school districts can recover ADA funds. In turn, they can pump that ADA back into this entity, such as my alternative program.

What happens to these students? From September 2 to December 19, we had in language, reading, and mathematics, .5 to 12.5 grade gains. One black student made 20 grade gains in those three major learning areas. Needless to say, he can pass the GED. Other possibilities from these alternative learning programs, include not only the GED, but also return to traditional



school environments, and I've put a dozen students back into the school once we raised their reading and mathematics achievement levels.

Some of our students have gone on to the community college, in fact, several dozen. Many have gone into vocational training, and some, in fact about 70 percent, are in unsubsidized part-time or full-time employment. In the Odessa market, with 16.9 unemployment, that's pretty darn good for our youth.

What happens to our kids? I don't do any advertising, so why do they come into this alternative program? I think they see it now in their community, in the Hispanic community, as a way for them to improve their self-image and self-concept. They come there knowing that this white guy and his staff are going to show respect for their dignity, are going to elevate them, and we're going to confront them when they do wrong, but we're going to confront them in a supportive way.

I have literature with me and I have some brochures to share with you because we have limited time, and I regret that I have no further things to share with you, but I have really personally appreciated this day more than I ever could have anticipated. *Muchísimas gracias; muy amables.*

### **Cathy Erwin—Texas School Dropout Survey Group**

We tried to put together some recommendations. Most of them were going to be recommendations to the State Board of Education, but then we started talking about a lot of other things, and I'm going to read them.

I've heard some of the same recommendations from the other groups. One is that we need funds for summer school. Students shouldn't have to pay for summer school. There was, again, repeated the concern that perhaps House Bill 72 is recognizing elitist needs and maybe losing a lot of students in the process. (That wasn't a recommendation—maybe just a comment to be passed on.)

Another recommendation that I heard was to expand the school year. This seems to be an idea that not only would more learning take place, but it would also relieve some of the economic pressures for working parents. There were questions about the tutorial program—we didn't actually come up with a recommendation—except that there were comments that perhaps people needed to know more accurately what was going on in tutorial



programs. There were comments that there seems to be low Hispanic participation in the tutorials. Another recommendation was for some night school. Why are we stuck with going to school from eight to four? We also came up with the recommendation that counselors actually do counseling, not just be in charge of testing and paperwork, but actually doing counseling, and particularly, at the elementary school level.

We also had a recommendation that the agency fund and have local school districts devise bilingual curricula. It was mentioned that pre-kindergarten for limited-English proficiency children was in jeopardy, and that perhaps the Symposium would want to go on record as supporting the pre-kindergarten. We also mentioned that the state should recognize the Head Start model of program, due to the parental involvement.

There was also a recommendation that an effort be made to recruit more minority teachers and to have more hours of field experience with minority children required for teacher certification. Also, that teachers should visit homes of kindergarten through sixth-grade children at least once a year.

Our group wanted to support the current school dropout bill that Clyde Kelsey shared with us that he had just read in the paper and that is being debated now in the state legislature.

We talked about the fact that we needed a holistic approach rather than an add-on approach. We also talked about attitudes of teachers of young children, and that perhaps a mentorship should be in place as an inservice requirement for teachers dealing with Hispanic children. We also noted that, why do new teachers teach the fundamentals of mathematics classes and the master teachers end up teaching honors classes? Isn't that backwards? Shouldn't the master teachers have some of the hardest classes, hardest to motivate and to teach? These are basically the recommendations that we came up with in our group.

### **Lucy Gutiérrez—Lubbock, Texas**

I was particularly interested in attending this session because of Rosita's mention this morning of a night high school. Our group reiterated that we do have to become very creative with our course offerings for our students. I think the public schools have done an outstanding job with many of us, and we're not done yet. We're trying to find out what it is that our kids need, because we

truly are out there for the kids. I hope, and I know that every one of us here today understands that.

We have to be creative, and because of what Dr. Erwin said earlier, I think that sometimes we focus on the area that is not the key issue. So if kids are saying "Hey, I'm not finishing high school because of economic reasons," then some of these alternative schedules will be good for schools. At the evening high school that Rosita talked about, they hold classes from 7:00 to 9:30 at night—and these are regular high school courses. If students are behind in a course and need to come in at night to make up that course, then they can do that. If students have to leave at a certain time of the day to go to work, then they can come back at night and take that course. She said that they offer the courses depending on what the student need is, so that if there's one student who needs an algebra course, and it's not offered at that school, then that student possibly can go to another high school and take the course there. I think that's a wonderful way to meet the needs of these kids with the regular program offerings we have. Some of these kids are not necessarily your strong students, but because they want to succeed, we have to make allowances for that in our school day.

Dr. Mary Garcia shared with us that they have a nine-period day that begins at 7:30 in the morning, so that if they begin at 7:30 in the morning, they finish up earlier in the afternoon. If they do have to go to work, they can still meet the daily requirement. If they have to work early in the morning, they can come later in the morning and go later in the afternoon.

Another item is that in San Antonio, they have libraries that are open for students to go to work on assignments. This is done at night so that the parents can accompany the students. That way, someone will be there to help the parent and student in homework assignments. Students are given assistance in a full spectrum of course offerings, once again, depending on the demands of the students.

One of the other big areas that we talked about is the staff training, because the attitude of the teachers in working with our students is so important. One of the keys to working with dropouts is having teachers who understand the needs that our students have as opposed to taking kids through a curriculum just because that's what the state asks us to do. Teacher expectations, of course, have a high contribution to the student's success. Dr. Garcia talked about the fact that in their staff

training (and they're doing a very comprehensive program at this point), they're working with teachers on questioning strategies. As I've worked with the new appraisal system, [Texas Teacher Appraisal System] that's one of the things I have shared with the teachers over and over: that have you noticed how your questions can always be a yes or a no? Have you noticed how your kids can guess and get an answer right? Have you noticed how many times you don't say, "Why? Tell me what you thought about before you arrived at that decision. Tell me what else can happen as a result of that." How we as educators can dignify even incorrect answers is important. If I ever give pats on the back to teachers, it's when I say, "You know, that student was wrong, but you didn't make him feel wrong. You picked up on that and you gave the correct information, but that student didn't feel bad about giving an incorrect response."

Once again, we talked about teacher expectations of the students, and how important it is for the parents to become involved. Then we picked up on someone else in another district, in fact from New Mexico, from Portales, who said, "Okay, you're talking about parental involvement over, and over, and over. How many of you in your district offer parent training?" And one of our three districts represented offered parent training. We want the parents to come in, but we don't train them. We expect them to know what to do when they come into the classroom. And then we say we don't have enough parents involved. Well, if they themselves did not attend school, then how do we expect them to come in and work with our children?

Many of us were very very fortunate in the fact that we had our parents there, whether they were helping or not, they were there. And those are the kinds of things that encouraged us, but we expect them to be there now, but we don't necessarily offer parent training courses. Some said being a parent is a hard job, and believe you me, I know that and I live that day-to-day. I think one of the best mechanisms that I have in working with my parents is the fact that I close the door, and I say that I'm not going to talk to you as a principal, I'm going to talk to you as a parent, who goes home dead tired every day, and then I have to help my first grader because her reading is lacking at this point or she needs help with math, or last week it was a project where we made the big kangaroo in the picture book, and the last thing I wated to do was work with that, but as a parent, I have scheduled a certain time every day.

Archbishop Flores talked about the fact that you may have nine children and one table and have to feed in shifts. Do we give parents alternatives in how to work with the children once they do get home? So one important issue, I think, that came from what we talked about is that we need to have an articulated goal of what needs to happen with the parental involvement programs in our communities. We want to teach parents how to be parents. Someone said becoming a parent happens in many different ways. Sometimes you didn't plan and choose that.

Dallas I.S.D. has a program that is called Las Amigas, which is a Junior League group that comes in and volunteers time to work in the pre-kindergarten program. They come into the district to work with the pre-kindergarten children by reading to the group, telling stories, getting feedback, and those kinds of things. This is strictly a volunteer program. Instead of giving an hour or two, they do give a full half-day of time. Then as a result of this, we talked about university training of teachers. Are teachers taught how to teach parents on how to work with our kids? As a bilingual director one year with a Title VII grant bringing in parental involvement, the teachers would say to me "What do I do with aide?" Or, "What do I do with those parents you sent me?" I had to backtrack, because we had not taught the teachers how to work with the parents in our classrooms. Is this happening on the university level? Are we teaching teachers how to utilize community personnel, and of course the parents?

Finally, we wondered whether districts are recruiting Hispanics as administrators or teachers. They do serve as positive role models for our students. Of course, this is a dilemma throughout the state. We would all like to have good bilingual instructional people, and that seems to be an area that we're so deficient in at this time. Teacher training that would offer aide training that would in turn make more teachers for us would be an area that we really need to look at.

### Lydia Limón

Understanding the importance of finishing up on time this afternoon, and only wanting to cover the most important aspects, I'll be brief. Some of the items that have been covered today, we discussed in our group. There are three key issues. The first one was a need to find ways of addressing the problems of the Hispanic dropout issue without adding costs. When we look at

the financial constraints we're facing nowadays, it becomes very important to look at that and try to look for ways of tracking our students without adding financial costs. The second item is the importance of setting up a task force. We felt that this was *very* important. This could lead to community involvement and recognition of the problem. The third and final one that we stressed (and it was mentioned also before) was hiring the most effective teachers in any program that will address the dropout issue. Anytime that we can have highly sensitive individuals who will be working with our students, I think that we're going to be more successful.

# Closing Remarks

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## Dean Richard E. Ishler—Texas Tech University

Let me say how pleased we are that all of you took time to come to Lubbock today to participate in this symposium. Some of you were here two years ago, and I believe that this one far surpassed the one that we had last time—and that was a great one also. I believe the difference was that this time we were able to focus our attention on a particular issue. Last time we sort of covered the waterfront, and we decided this time to focus on a particular issue, and I believe that's what made this such a good conference.

I picked up a lot of useful information. We're going to have to extend our teacher education program by seven years in order to accommodate all of these things. But I do believe that there are a lot of things that were said today, and that the research supports, that we need to include in our teacher education program. I don't believe that we're ever going to solve this problem of dropouts until we prepare better teachers—and administrators as well—who can understand the needs of these students. We will do what we can to try to include those kinds of things in our training program.

Some of you know that there's a move underway in the state legislature to limit the amount of time that we have in professional education to 18 semester hours. We just got away from 18 semester hours to 24 and 30 for secondary and elementary teachers respectively, and now there's a move to limit the amount of time that we have in professional education. Obviously those who advocate such positions don't understand the nature of the work that we must do.

Again, and on behalf of President Cavazos, I really appreciate your coming to this symposium. We have a lot of good information to put together. You will receive a Proceedings document that will include all these speeches and all the recommendations that were made. We look forward to putting together our third Symposium on Hispanic Education Issues in another year or so. Thank you very much for coming; we appreciate it.